



Malay Cultural Orientation

June 2014

Malay Cultural Orientation: Contents

Chapter 1: Profile	6
Introduction	6
Climate	7
Major Cities	8
<i>Kuala Lumpur</i>	8
<i>Georgetown (George Town)</i>	8
<i>Kota Kinabalu</i>	9
<i>Kuching</i>	9
History	10
<i>Pre-Colonial History</i>	10
<i>British Colonial Rule</i>	11
<i>Transition to Independence</i>	12
<i>Early Years of Independence (1963-2000)</i>	12
<i>Malaysia in the 21st Century</i>	13
Government	14
Media	15
Economy	16
Ethnic Groups	17
<i>Malay</i>	17
<i>Chinese</i>	18
<i>Indians</i>	19
<i>Orang Asli</i>	20
<i>Dayak</i>	21
Endnotes	22
<i>Overview: Chapter 1 Assessment</i>	30
Chapter 2: Religion	31

Introduction	31
Islam in Malaysia	32
<i>Care and Treatment of the Quran</i>	33
Religion and Government	33
Religion in Daily Life	34
Religion and Gender	35
Religious Events and Holidays	36
<i>Ramadan</i>	37
<i>Hari Raya Puasa (Eid Al-Fidr)</i>	38
<i>Hari Raya Haji (Eid al-Adha)</i>	39
Places of Worship	39
Behavior in Places of Worship	40
Endnotes	42
<i>Overview: Chapter 2 Assessment</i>	48
Chapter 3 Traditions	49
Introduction	49
Honors and Values	50
Greetings and Titles	51
<i>Greetings</i>	51
<i>Titles</i>	52
Hospitality and Gift Giving	53
Eating Habits and Types of Food	54
<i>Eating Customs</i>	54
<i>Types of Food</i>	55
Dress Codes	56
Non-religious Holidays	57
Do's and Don'ts	58
Endnotes	59
<i>Overview: Chapter 3 Assessment</i>	64

Chapter 4: Urban Life	65
Introduction	65
Urbanization Issues	66
Healthcare	67
Education	68
Restaurants	69
Shopping	71
<i>Markets and Vendors</i>	71
Money, Credit Cards, and ATMs	72
Transportation	73
<i>Cars and Traffic</i>	73
<i>Taxis and Pedicabs</i>	73
<i>Trains and Metros</i>	74
<i>Buses</i>	75
Street Crimes and Solicitations	75
<i>Crime</i>	75
Beggars	76
Endnotes	77
<i>Overview: Chapter 4 Assessment</i>	84
Chapter 5: Rural Life	85
Introduction	85
Land Ownership and Distribution	86
Economy	87
Transportation	88
Healthcare	89
Education	90
Who's in Charge	91

Border Crossings and Checkpoints.....	92
Landmines	94
Endnotes	95
<i>Overview: Chapter 5 Assessment</i>	100
Chapter 6: Family Life	101
Introduction.....	101
Typical Household and Family Structure.....	102
The Status of Women.....	103
Status of Children the Elderly.....	104
<i>Children</i>	104
<i>The Elderly</i>	105
Married Life, Divorce, and Birth.....	106
<i>Marriage</i>	106
<i>Divorce</i>	107
<i>Birth</i>	108
Family Social Events.....	108
<i>Weddings</i>	108
<i>Funerals</i>	109
<i>Childhood Rituals</i>	110
Naming Conventions.....	111
Endnotes	112
<i>Overview: Chapter 6 Assessment</i>	118
<i>Malay Cultural Orientation: Final Assessment</i>	119
<i>Malay Cultural Orientation: Further Reading</i>	122



Malacca Waterway
© Hadi Zaher

Chapter 1: Profile

Introduction

Malaysia is located in Southeast Asia, consisting of two separate land masses, Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia. Peninsular Malaysia is a narrow projection of land that extends from Thailand, down to the southernmost tip of the Republic of Singapore. East Malaysia consists of two states, Sabah and Sarawak. These two states are located on the northern coast of the island of Borneo.^{1,2} Overall, Malaysia is a relatively small southeast Asian country that is slightly larger than New Mexico, half the size of Burma, two-thirds the size of Thailand, and one-sixth the size of Indonesia.^{3,4}

Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia were both colonized by the British.⁵ Prior to colonial rule, the peninsula was sparsely populated. Colonial era immigration from China and India transformed it into a multicultural society, with different groups working in different economic areas. Immigrant groups engaged in limited social interaction, reinforcing each group's unique ethnic heritage, language, and religion.. This separation posed a challenge during the post-colonial period, when Sarawak, Sabah, and briefly Singapore were incorporated into Malaysia.^{6,7}

The Malaysians of today are comprised of many different ethnic groups. Article 153 of the constitution states it “shall be the responsibility of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (the paramount ruler: Sultan to safeguard the special position of the Malays and natives of any of the States of Sabah and Sarawak...”⁸ Although the political system is currently stable, Malay social diversity continues to pose a significant challenge for the nation.⁹



Fog in the Crocker Mountains
© Cephoto, Uwe Aranas

Climate

Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia are separated by the South China Sea. Both lie slightly north of the equator and are subject to the same air currents, making their climates virtually the same.^{10, 11} Temperatures are hot, with daytime highs in the low 30s°C (90s°F). Evening temperatures frequently fall to the low 20s°C (mid 70s°F).¹² Average temperatures range from 23°C –34°C (74°F –93°F), with humidity hovering between 70% and 90%.^{13, 14}

Peninsular Malaysia typically experiences two dry seasons, which alternate with two rainy seasons.

The driest months are June and July for most of the peninsula, with secondary dry spells in February. This pattern is reversed in the northwest. This region typically experiences the driest months in January and February, with a secondary dry season in June and July.¹⁵ The rainy seasons are in the winter and summer months. November through January is typically the wettest months along the east coast.¹⁶ For the rest of Peninsular Malaysia, except for the southwest coast, the heaviest rains fall in October and November, and in April and May.¹⁷ The average rainfall in Peninsular Malaysia is 254 cm (100 in), most of which falls during the southwest monsoon (roughly May–October).^{18, 19, 20}

In the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak, weather patterns vary somewhat. The coastal areas have a single wet season, and a single dry season. The wet season usually corresponds to the northeast monsoon (roughly October–February). January is the wettest month.^{21, 22, 23} The driest months along coastal Sarawak are June and July. The driest month along coastal northeast Sabah is April.²⁴ Rainfall is much more balanced in the inland areas, although June to August is somewhat drier than the rest of the year.²⁵ The hills and mountains of inland Sabah receive relatively less rainfall than the rest of the island.²⁶ The average yearly rainfall in Sabah is 263 cm (104 in). In neighboring Sarawak that amount is 385 cm (152 in).^{27, 28, 29}



Kuala Lumpur
© Andy Mitchell

Major Cities

Kuala Lumpur

Kuala Lumpur (“KL”) is Malaysia’s capital city.³⁰ Its origins date back to 1857, but the modern city is a relatively new.³¹

Kuala Lumpur lies in the west-central portion of Peninsular Malaysia, in an area known as the rubber belt. This is the nation’s largest city, as well as its cultural, commercial, and transportation hub.³² Kuala Lumpur sits at the confluence of the Kelang and Gombak rivers and was once a tin-collecting center. The city’s

population surged between 1948 and 1960, during communist guerilla uprisings and during forced resettlements on the city’s fringes.³³

Increasing growth and urban congestion at the beginning of the 21st century forced many of the federal offices to move to the new city of Putrajaya. This city is located just south of Kuala Lumpur.³⁴ Putrajaya is home to the Petronas Towers, owned by the state oil company. These towers were designated the seventh- and eighth-tallest buildings in the world in 2013.³⁵



Georgetown
© amrufm / Wikimedia.org

Georgetown (George Town)

Georgetown is located on Penang Island and is Malaysia’s leading port. Georgetown is also a UNESCO World Heritage site.^{36, 37} The city was acquired in 1786 by Sir Francis Light on behalf of the British East India Company (EIC). The city provided a much needed safe harbor to repair EIC ships. It also needed a safe harbor to protect its maritime trade in opium, between Indian Muslim traders in Penang and Chinese merchants.^{38, 39}

As a result, Sir Francis Light approached the Sultan of Kedah to offer British military defense of the sultanate, in return for using Penang for commercial and military purposes.⁴⁰

Modern-day Georgetown is the site of major industries, including smelting, rice and coconut-oil milling and other manufacturing plants.⁴¹ The Kek Lok Si Temple complex is located just outside the city. This temple complex houses thousands of gilded statues of Buddha.⁴²



Aerial view, Kota Kinabalu
© thienziyung / flickr.com

Kota Kinabalu

Kota Kinabalu is located in the state of Sabah on the island of Borneo. It was a fishing village in the late 1890s, due to the British North Borneo Company recognizing the potential of this area as a deep-sea port. It was eventually renamed Jesselton, after Sir Charles Jessel, who was a ranking official in the company.

The city suffered extensive damage during World War II from Japanese bombings. After the war it became the new capital of British North Borneo, because of its deep water anchorage.⁴³

It was again renamed in 1968 to Kota Kinabalu, three years after North Borneo voted to join the Federation of Malaya. The Federation then became

known as the Federation of Malaysia, with the inclusion of North Borneo, Sarawak, and Singapore.⁴⁴

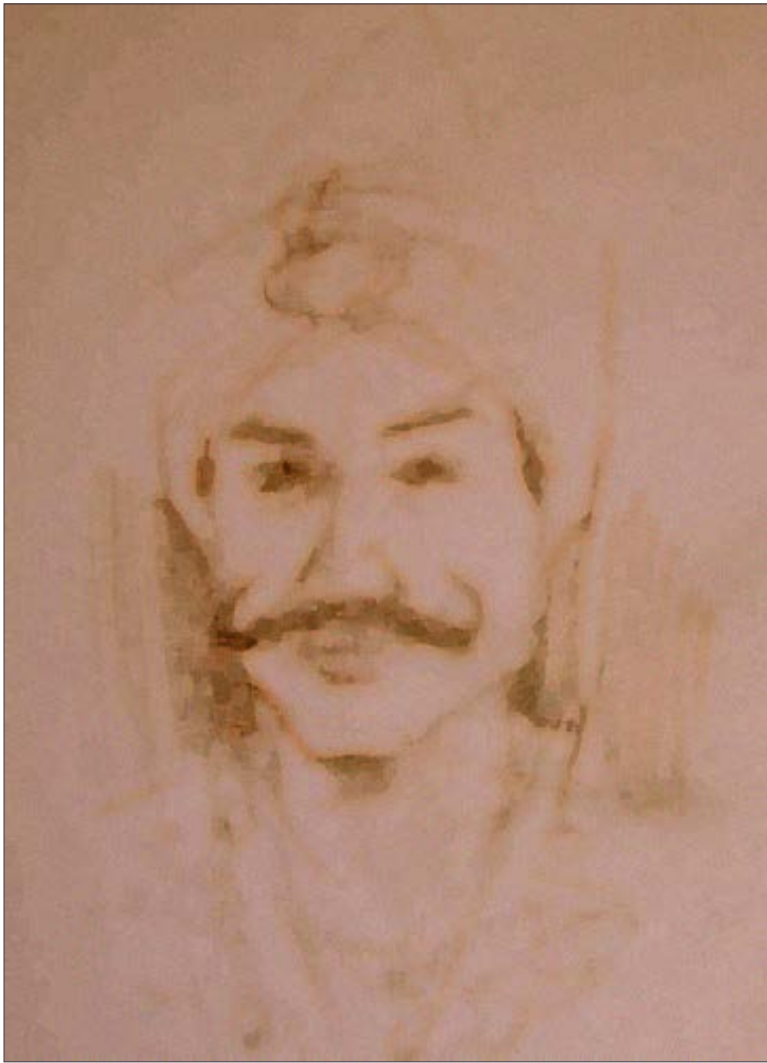
The Chinese are the largest ethnic group in the city. Its main commercial activity is government services, although there is some light industry and manufacturing.⁴⁵



Kuching City
© CoolCityCat / Wikimedia.org

Kuching

Kuching is the capital of Sarawak state.⁴⁶ Founded in 1839 by Sir James Brooke, the city's population is predominantly Chinese. The city is also home to a significant number of Dayaks.⁴⁷ Today, the city is a major administrative center and sea port.⁴⁸ The city is divided by the Sarawak River. To the south is the commercial area, home to an ethnic Chinese community. To the north is the Malay portion of the city.⁴⁹ The city boasts several important architectural sites, including Tua Pek Kong, the oldest Chinese temple in the area, and the new State Mosque.⁵⁰ Kuching is often regarded as one of the most beautiful cities in Southeast Asia due to its blend of modern and old-world charm.



Depection of Prince Paramesvara
© L Joo / Wikimedia.org

History

Pre-Colonial History

Malays had established coastal settlements long before the arrival of Europeans. These pre-colonial settlements served as trading posts for maritime traffic.⁵¹ Archaeological evidence suggests that the earliest inhabitants of this region visited the area about 40,000 years ago. Additional evidence suggests that Peninsular Malaysia has been settled for at least 6,000 years, and that Malay kingdoms began to appear by the second and third centuries C.E.⁵² These early kingdoms were heavily influenced by Indian culture and religion.⁵³ Over time, it developed a reputation as a center for tin and gold, as regional sea trade grew. In response, many regional powers began to assert their authority over Peninsular Malaysia. The Srivijaya empire (7th-13th centuries C.E.), based in Sumatra, was one of the most significant powers to assert their authority. Other regional powers included the Tai Kingdom of Ayutthaya, and the Javanese empire of Majapahit.⁵⁴

Present-day Muslim Malaysia is located on the peninsula's west coast. It traces its origins to the Malaccan Sultanate, which was established by the Javanese Prince Paramesvara after he fled attacks on his native land. Paramesvara converted to Islam during this time, and took the name Iskandar Shah.

Within several years, the new Malaccan Sultanate was able to secure trade relations with Ming China, and control trade routes between India and China. Malacca (*Melaka*) quickly grew into a thriving commercial district, which also facilitated its distinction as the regional center for disseminating Islam.^{55, 56} Malayan rajas (kings) were thus known as sultans, and their kingdoms were called sultanates.⁵⁷

The Portuguese captured Malacca in 1511, leading to the creation of several competing sultanates on the peninsula. Each sultanate sought to dominate regional trade.⁵⁸ The Dutch eventually replaced the Portuguese, briefly controlling trade on both sides of the Malacca Strait. The Dutch lost control to the British East India Company, when a trading post was opened on Penang Island in 1786.⁵⁹



Malacca Sultanate Palace
© Adiput / Wikimedia.org

British Colonial Rule

The British established an early colonial presence in Malacca for the exploitation of its natural resources, specifically tin and rubber.⁶⁰ The British eventually took over control of the region under the name British Malaya.^{61,62} Between the 18th and 20th centuries, British Malaya occupied the entire peninsula north, to modern-day Thailand. This region consisted of the British Crown Straits Settlements, including Malacca, four federated Malay states, and five non-federated Malay States.⁶³

The British relied on a model of “indirect rule,” in which sultans and local aristocrats maintained their status and authority over religious matters.

The British then remade the peninsula into an export economy, so the sultans did little to challenge British rule. The British export trade required sufficient labor to support it, and utilized the labor of Chinese and Indian workers.^{64, 65}

However, Malays were economically marginalized in this scheme. A series of land preservation schemes and other measures protected Malaysian subsistence farmers from the economic pressures of colonial plantation agriculture.⁶⁶ This resulted in a number of economic gains for ethnic Chinese miners and other laborers. They were better positioned than Malays to take advantage of the expanding trade market, move into the towns, and established businesses as shop-keepers and money lenders. The Chinese eventually controlled local commerce on both the peninsula and Borneo.⁶⁷

The Japanese occupied Peninsular Malaysia during World War II. The Japanese slogan “Asia for Asians” was well received among ethnic Malays, yet it was less popular among the other ethnic groups. The Malays supported the Japanese during this period, while the Chinese backed the British. The Chinese sent large sums of money to support homeland resistance and even organized the Malay People’s Anti-Japanese Army on the Malay Peninsula. The army took control of several places on the peninsula after the Japanese were defeated. The well-coordinated actions of the Chinese led some Malays to worry they might end up like the Native Americans.⁶⁸ Allied control was eventually restored. Yet, the future remained uncertain; though it was clear the country would not return to colonialism.



Insignia of the UMNO
© Tebu.an / Wikimedia.org

Transition to Independence

In January 1946, the British proposed unifying the nine Malay states and the two Crown Straits settlements of Malacca and Penang, under a central government. The peninsula and Malaya became independent two years later in 1948, under the name “Federation of Malaysia,” with special rights guaranteed to native Malays.^{69,70} Ethnic Chinese residents were distressed by this move, since they felt they were targeted for unfair treatment.

That same year, the Chinese majority Communist Party of Malaya began an insurgency designed to bring down the government.⁷¹ In response, the British forcibly resettled the Chinese to new towns away from the insurgents. However, this only intensified anti-government sentiment.⁷² Promising full independence, the British began negotiations with various groups, including the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malayan Chinese Association, and the Malayan Indian Congress. These negotiations resulted in a united, ethnically-based coalition known as the National Front (BN), which continues to govern.⁷³

The Federation of Malaya finally gained independence in 1957, although the British crown colony of Singapore was not part of the union. Under the terms of the new constitution, Malays would retain their privileged status, the kingship of the federation would rotate among the nine sultans, and Islam became the national religion.^{74,75}



Kids in village on Borneo
© globalcitizen01 / flickr.com

Early Years of Independence (1963-2000)

The new federation of Malaysia was established in September 1963. This federation united Malaysia, Singapore, and the eastern states of Sarawak and Sabah on the island of Borneo.⁷⁶ Yet, the new nation of Malaysia faced several critical problems immediately following its independence. The government’s increasing emphasis on the creation of a Malay national identity fueled long-standing ethnic tensions. Additionally, Singapore seceded from the new union and there were communist insurgencies in Sarawak, while tensions grew between East Malaysia and Peninsular Malaysia.⁷⁷

There were also rising ethnic tensions and distrust between Muslims and other religious groups. Yet, Malaysia was able to maintain a

democratic, albeit authoritarian parliamentary system. The nation's first three prime ministers were members of the aristocratic class. The fourth, Mahathir bin Mohamad, was the first non-aristocrat to hold the office. Mahathir remained prime minister for 22 years and ruled with an autocratic hand. His economic policies were largely successful. However, his other policies divided Malaysia's largest political party, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), as well as the nation.^{78, 79} The Supreme Court eventually challenged Mahathir's election win, declaring the UMNO illegal. This resulted in the dissolution of the UMNO by the prime minister who formed a new Malay party, UMNO Baru. The new party set out to unite the various factions in the country.⁸⁰



Protests in Kuala Lumpur
© Firdaus Latif

Malaysia in the 21st Century

Mahathir stepped down in 2003 and Malaysia went on to improve relations with Singapore. However, the Malay economy had weakened by 2009 and the government took drastic measures to protect its citizens, including banning foreign workers. The government implemented an economic stimulus plan to avoid falling deeper into recession, and the prime minister resigned.⁸¹

A year later, long simmering religious tensions came to the forefront and by 2011, people were leveling charges of political scandal and corruption.^{82, 83, 84} Protestors staged demonstrations demanding election reform, but by police with tear gas and water cannons.⁸⁵

Demands for reform continued into 2012, with much the same response from police.^{86, 87} The Malaysian government and the people currently faces difficult challenges. The economy is floundering as racial tensions combine with economic frailties to increase prices and the cost of living.⁸⁸ A number of leading pundits rate Malaysia a “medium” risk for political instability, approximately the same as Mexico and most of South America.^{89, 90}



State Assembly Building in Penang
© Gryffindor / Wikimedia.org

Government

The Malaysian government is a constitutional monarchy with an elected head of state. It is modeled on the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy, a legacy of British colonial rule.^{91, 92} The country is divided into 13 states and 3 federal territories: the city of Kuala Lumpur, the island of Labuan, and the Putrajaya federal administrative center. Nine of these states are headed by sultans (hereditary rulers), and the remaining four are headed by appointed governors.^{93, 94} The executive branch is composed of three units: a Monarch (chief of state), a Prime Minister (head of state), and a

Cabinet.

The Malaysian Monarch (Sultan) is the chief of state. It is an elected position held by a sultan who is selected from among the nine hereditary rulers. The position can therefore rotate among sultans from different Malaysian states.^{95, 96} The head of state is the Prime Minister, who is the leader of the majority party in the lower house of the legislature.⁹⁷ The Cabinet is selected by the prime minister and approved by the sultan.⁹⁸

The legislative branch is composed of two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate (Dewan Negara) has 70 members, who serve three-year terms with the possibility of one additional term. Forty-four of the members are appointed by the Sultan and 26 are elected by state legislators.^{99, 100} The House of Representatives (Dewan Rakyat) has 222 seats filled by direct election of members for 5-year terms.^{101, 102}

The judicial branch is composed of the nation's courts. The nation maintains a dual court system, Federal and Civil. The highest court is the Federal Court, headed by a chief justice. Federal Court justices are appointed by the sultan, in consultation with the prime minister. Judges can serve until the age of 65.^{103, 104} The civil courts typically oversee issues related to family and financial disputes and are guided by Sharia law.^{105, 106}



Media reporter
© C. K. Koay

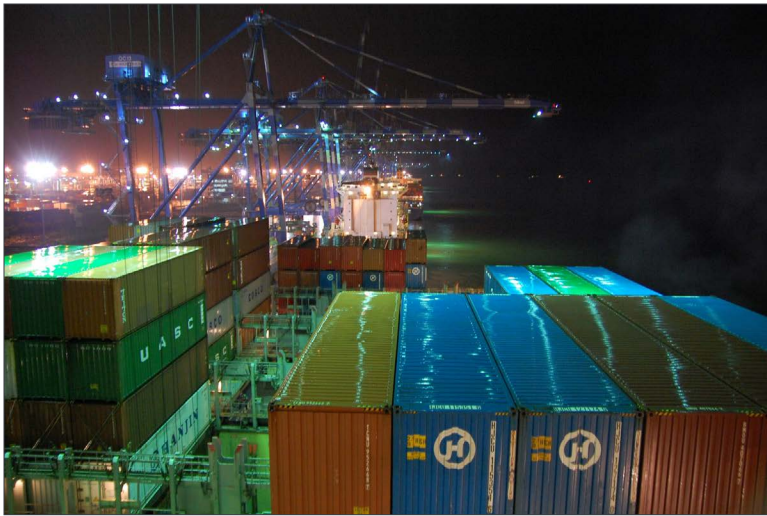
Media

The World Freedom Index of 2013 ranked Malaysia 145th out of 176 countries.^{107, 108} The Malaysian constitution guarantees freedom of expression, yet it also allows limitations to the right.¹⁰⁹ The government owns two television networks and numerous radio stations that broadcast throughout the nation. The leading media group is believed to have strong ties to the current ruling party and operates four television stations, while private commercial and satellite stations are also available.^{110, 111}

The majority of print and broadcast media are controlled by political parties or businesses with close ties to the government.¹¹² Critics of the government are often suppressed under the Sedition Act. Individuals who own or host online websites are liable for any content published through their services.¹¹³ Journalists frequently face the threat of arrest or other legal actions.¹¹⁴

The internet has provided a public space that is more difficult to control. Approximately two-

thirds of the population used the internet in 2012, gaining access to many competing points of view. Social networking sites have continued to expand and have offered the opportunity to challenge corruption and debate government policies.^{115, 116} There is no clear evidence of censorship or government surveillance of the internet, but there is little privacy protection for users. Police access text message content from phone companies, sometimes without first gaining judicial approval. Some believe that the government launches direct attacks, or even sponsors attacks, on certain websites by overloading servers and forcing them to crash.¹¹⁷



Containers on ship in Port Klang
© jgmorard / flickr.com

Economy

Malaysia is classified as a middle-income nation. The service sector employs approximately 54% of the labor force and contributes nearly 48% to the GDP. Industry is a close second at 41% of GDP and 36% of the labor force. Major industries include rubber and oil palm processing, petroleum and natural gas, and technology. Agriculture accounts for slightly more than 11% of GDP. Major cash products include palm oil, rubber, cocoa, and rice.¹¹⁸

The Malaysian economy is heavily dependent on exports. This makes it susceptible to global financial pressures.¹¹⁹ The slow recovery in larger world economies has slowed global trade and reduced demand for Malaysia's exports. Prices for the nation's main agricultural exports have steadily declined since early 2012.¹²⁰ Between 2010 and 2013, the largest driver of economic growth was capital investment, mostly in the real estate, oil and gas, and infrastructure sectors.¹²¹ Unemployment is relatively low and stood at about 3.3% in October 2013.¹²²

The outlook for the economy is favorable, but with challenges. Longer term growth depends on the implementation of structural reforms, and a reduction in its dependence on the oil and gas sector.^{123, 124} The nation's policy of requiring that ethnic Malays own at least 30% of any business could hurt future progress.¹²⁵ Growth is expected to rise in 2014 by as much as 5% as global trade continues to recover. However, lower prices for agricultural products are expected to hurt rural areas.¹²⁶



Malay Air employees taking a break
© Janne Moren

Ethnic Groups

Malay

Malays are the dominant ethnic group and represent approximately half of the population.¹²⁷ Their name refers to the people who lived on the mountainous Malay Archipelago, which includes the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. Malays share a common cultural heritage that includes adherence to *adat* (customary law) and unconditional loyalty (*kerajaan*) to the sultan. Malays speak a number of dialects derived from their Austronesian based language.¹²⁸ Malays refer to themselves as

Bumiputera (sons of the soil).

The constitutional definition of Malay states that a Malaysian Malay is “a person born to a Malaysian citizen who professes to be a Muslim; habitually speaks the Malay language; adheres to customs; and is domiciled in Malaysia or Singapore.”^{129, 130, 131} In the Malay language (*bahasa melayu*) the expression *masuk melayu* has two meanings: 1) to become a Muslim; 2) to become a Malay, reflecting the importance of the Islamic faith to the Malay identity.¹³²

Malays are accorded ethnic status in Indonesia, yet are recognized as a race in Malaysia.¹³³ It has been argued that the concept of a “Malay race” is rooted in the colonial era when the British sought to classify people for census purposes.¹³⁴ Regardless, even more recent arrivals from Java and the Middle Eastern identify themselves as Malay. This might be to gain from the advantages of being ethnic Malay.¹³⁵



Malay-Chinese ladies
© Shankar S / flickr.com

Chinese

The Chinese are the second largest ethnic group and represent approximately 24% of the population.¹³⁶ Many emigrated from southeastern China. They are a diverse linguistic group and primarily speak Hokkien, Hainanese, Cantonese, and Hakka. These languages are not mutually intelligible, so many people will converse in Mandarin. Those of mixed Chinese and Malay heritage retain Chinese customs, manners, and habits and are considered ethnic Chinese.¹³⁷ Most of the major population centers on the Malay Peninsula, including Kuala Lumpur, originated as Chinese mining towns.

Developments beyond Malaya aided the emergence of a collective ethnic Chinese identity. The Japanese occupation of the peninsula during World War II spurred a Chinese resistance. After the war, some felt betrayed when the Malay demanded that immigrants have fewer rights than *Bumiputera*.¹³⁸ Some ethnic Chinese then went on to wage a campaign of terror and violence against mine and rubber plantation managers. It was hoped the resulting loss of income would force the British to leave Malaya, and enable the communists to establish an independent government.¹³⁹

The British responded by mounting a quasi-successful counterinsurgency. The main focus was relocating those with communist sympathies to village settlements under British control. The British specifically targeted Chinese miners and those living in squatter settlements. These people did not have strong communist sympathies, but they were willing to provide support in ethnic solidarity. The British were eventually able to push both insurgents and their sympathizers back into the jungle along the Malay-Thai border. Nevertheless, discontent and guerrilla attacks continued and a 12-year state of emergency ensued.

The state of emergency was officially declared over in 1960. Yet, the Malaysian government did not sign a peace accord with the remaining guerrillas until 1989.¹⁴⁰ Measures adopted by the government to combat the insurgency remain in place and have been used to quell peaceful dissent.¹⁴¹

Many ethnic Chinese continue to feel discriminated against, mostly because of governmental preference for ethnic Malays. This preference includes the exclusive use Malay in schools, barring the use of Chinese.¹⁴² Chinese students also find it very difficult to secure places in national universities. Many believe it is due to their Chinese ethnicity.¹⁴³



Indian wedding
© Nguyen Thanh Lam

Indians

The term Indian is used in Malaysia to designate all people from the subcontinent. This includes Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka as well as India.¹⁴⁴ Eleven percent of the Malaysian population is composed of ethnic Indians, including the Tamil Indians who make up the majority.^{145, 146} The Indian population practices a variety of faiths. Approximately 80% are Hindu.¹⁴⁷ About 10% practice Islam and a minority are Sikhs or Christians.^{148, 149} Most (70%) can be classified as poor or very poor, which is considerably above the national poverty rate.¹⁵⁰

Many Indians who came to Malaya were members of the untouchable caste. They had endured wretched conditions in India and this made them attractive recruits for labor-intensive plantation agriculture. The British had significant colonial experience in the Indian subcontinent, and viewed the Tamils as docile. They recruited them to do repetitive tasks, as well as the back breaking work of cultivating cash crops.¹⁵¹ The Tamils were less well organized and had less pronounced ambitions the Chinese, who the British found difficult to manage.

Tamil status was unclear after Malaya gained independence, because many Tamils did not qualify for citizenship. The economy began to shift from a plantation based model to manufacturing and factory job quotas were allocated to ethnic Malays. Rubber plantation land was also increasingly rezoned, putting Tamil communities at risk of being razed for redevelopment. The destruction of several Hindu temples became flashpoints for public anger in the Tamil community.¹⁵² An organization known as the Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF) advocated for Indians' rights. In November 2007, HINDRAF organized a protest march through Kuala Lumpur. They demanded USD four trillion in reparations from the British for bringing them to Malaysia, and then failing to secure equal status for them after exploiting their labor.¹⁵³ The protest was broken up by the police and the leadership was detained under the provisions of the ISA.



Orang Asli women
© *International Rivers / flickr.com*

Orang Asli

Orang Asli means “original people” and refers to indigenous groups on the Malay Peninsula—many of whom were traditionally forest dwellers.¹⁵⁴ The Orang Asli were mostly isolated until the middle of the 19th century, allowing them to maintain a strong hold on traditional lifestyles. There are 18 ethnic groups that comprise the Orang Asli, which are commonly subdivided into three distinct subgroups: the Negrito, the Senoi, and the Proto-Malay.¹⁵⁵ Some of these groups remain engaged in their traditional hunter-gather activities, while many now cultivate rice near the hill country. Others have moved to the coast, where they make

a living as fishermen.¹⁵⁶

Forests were cleared for commercial logging and for rubber plantations, during British colonial rule. This affected the traditional Orang Asli way of life. Subsequent conservation efforts have also put pressure on the Orang Asli, who practice slash and burn agriculture rather than settled farming. The government now regulates Orang Asli access to forest land. They are also subject to non-voluntary resettlement to make room for development projects.^{157, 158}

Active efforts have been underway to convert the Orang Asli, and remove the distinction between indigenous people and *Bumiputera*. Conversion would open the door to a host of privileges. However, the Orang Asli have resisted. The Orang Asli retain much of their traditional lifestyle, including their animist beliefs. Nearly 70% are animists and about 15-20 % are Muslim. Another 10% are Christian.¹⁵⁹



Dayak man and boy
© Juha Riissanen

Dayak

The word *dayak* means inland or upriver in the indigenous Sarawak language. The label subsumes at least 26 different tribal groups.^{160, 161, 162} Dayaks are traditionally thought of as animists or Christians.^{163, 164} However, their traditional religion has recently been recognized as an offshoot of Hinduism.¹⁶⁵ The Dayak are subdivided into three groups: the Iban (or Sea Dayak); the Bidayuh (Land Dayaks); and the Orang ulu (people of the interior).¹⁶⁶ In 2006, the Dayak comprised approximately 40% of the population in the state of Sarawak on the island of Borneo.^{167, 168} The most

cohesive and organized of these are the Iban, who comprise approximately two-thirds of the Dayak in Malaysia. The least organized are the Orang ulu.¹⁶⁹

The Dayak and their way of life are currently under threat from logging, as well as urbanization of traditional Dayak land.^{170, 171} They do not hold title to the land because they follow communal land use systems that evolved generations ago. This enables the government to easily develop Dayak land. Such threats to their livelihood have encouraged the development of an ethnic consciousness, as a means to push for political rights. For example, the Lun Bawang Association was formed in Sarawak to represent a variety of groups. Each group took a name, such as Lun Dayeh (people of the upriver) and Lun Ba (people who cultivate rice paddy), to maximize their leverage in dealing with the government.¹⁷²

Endnotes

- 1 Jaime Koh and Stephanie Ho, "Chapter 1: Land, People, and History," in *Culture and Customs of Singapore and Malaysia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 2. http://www.amazon.com/Culture-Customs-Singapore-Malaysia-Asia/dp/0313351155/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1389030998&sr=8-3&keywords=culture+and+customs+of+malaysia#reader_0313351155
- 2 Francesca Di Piazza, "The Land," in *Malaysia in Pictures* (Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-first Century Press, 2006), 8-9.
- 3 George Cho, "Chapter 1: Malaysia: The Socio-Economic Background," in *The Malaysian Economy: Spatial Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 5.
- 4 Central Intelligence Agency, "Malaysia: Geography," in *The World Factbook*, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>
- 5 Jiang Ze Wen, "Secession of East Malaysia: The Right to Self-Determination," *The Rakyat Post*, 16 December 2013, <http://www.therakyatpost.com/allsides/2013/12/16/secession-of-east-malaysia-the-right-to-self-determination/>
- 6 Geoff Wade, "The Origins and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, 2008, <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Geoff-Wade/3259>
- 7 Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, "Country Profile: Malaysia," (country profile update, September 2006), 4-5, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Malaysia.pdf>
- 8 Geoff Wade, "The Origins and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, 2008, <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Geoff-Wade/3259>
- 9 BBC, "Malaysia Profile: Overview," 21 March 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-15356257>
- 10 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. "Country Profile: Malaysia" (country profile update, September 2006), 9, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Malaysia.pdf>
- 11 Francesca Di Piazza, "The Land," in *Malaysia in Pictures* (Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-first Century Press, 2006), 12.
- 12 Francesca Di Piazza, "The Land," in *Malaysia in Pictures* (Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-first Century Press, 2006), 12.
- 13 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. "Country Profile: Malaysia" (country profile update, September 2006), 9, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Malaysia.pdf>
- 14 Weather Online, "Malaysia," 2014, <http://www.weatheronline.co.uk/reports/climate/Malaysia.htm>
- 15 Malaysian Meteorological Department, "General Climate of Malaysia," 2014, http://www.met.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=1089&lang=english
- 16 Malaysian Meteorological Department, "General Climate of Malaysia," 2014, http://www.met.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=1089&lang=english
- 17 Malaysian Meteorological Department, "General Climate of Malaysia," 2013, http://www.met.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=1089&limit=1&limitstart=1
- 18 Mohamad Osman, "Chapter 11: Malaysia: Recent Initiatives to Develop Access and Benefit-Sharing Regulation," in *Assessing Biodiversity and Sharing the Benefits: Lessons from Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity*, eds., Santiago Carrizosa, et al. (Cambridge, UK: IUCN Publications, 2004), 243.
- 19 Francesca Di Piazza, "The Land," in *Malaysia in Pictures* (Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-first Century Press, 2006), 13.
- 20 Malaysian Meteorological Department, "General Climate of Malaysia," 2013, http://www.met.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=1089&limit=1&limitstart=1
- 21 Malaysian Meteorological Department, "General Climate of Malaysia," 2013, http://www.met.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=1089&limit=1&limitstart=1
- 22 Mohamad Osman, "Chapter 11: Malaysia: Recent Initiatives to Develop Access and Benefit-Sharing Regulation," in *Assessing Biodiversity and Sharing the Benefits: Lessons from Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity*, eds., Santiago Carrizosa, et al. (Cambridge, UK: IUCN Publications, 2004), 243.

- 23 Francesca Di Piazza, "The Land," in *Malaysia in Pictures* (Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-first Century Press, 2006), 13.
- 24 Malaysian Meteorological Department, "General Climate of Malaysia," 2013, http://www.met.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=1089&limit=1&limitstart=1
- 25 Malaysian Meteorological Department, "General Climate of Malaysia," 2013, http://www.met.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=1089&limit=1&limitstart=1
- 26 Malaysian Meteorological Department, "General Climate of Malaysia," 2013, http://www.met.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=1089&limit=1&limitstart=1
- 27 Mohamad Osman, "Chapter 11: Malaysia: Recent Initiatives to Develop Access and Benefit-Sharing Regulation," in *Assessing Biodiversity and Sharing the Benefits: Lessons from Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity*, eds., Santiago Carrizosa, et al. (Cambridge, UK: IUCN Publications, 2004), 243.
- 28 Francesca Di Piazza, "The Land," in *Malaysia in Pictures* (Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-first Century Press, 2006), 13.
- 29 Malaysian Meteorological Department, "General Climate of Malaysia," 2013, http://www.met.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=1089&limit=1&limitstart=1
- 30 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Kuala Lumpur," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/324134/Kuala-Lumpur>
- 31 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Kuala Lumpur," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/324134/Kuala-Lumpur>
- 32 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Kuala Lumpur," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/324134/Kuala-Lumpur>
- 33 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Kuala Lumpur," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/324134/Kuala-Lumpur>
- 34 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Kuala Lumpur," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/324134/Kuala-Lumpur>
- 35 Webburrr, "Tallest Building in the World, 10 Tallest Buildings in the World," 2014, <http://www.webburrr.com/misc/tallest-building-in-world-tallest-buildings/1621>
- 36 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "George Town," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/230135/George-Town>
- 37 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Melaka and George Town, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca," 2014, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1223>
- 38 Lan-Shiang Huang, "A Comparison on the Urban Spatial Structures of the British Colonial Port Cities among Calcutta, George Town and Singapore," (paper presented at The Penang Story – International Conference, 18–21 April 2002), 4, <http://www.penangstory.net.my/docs/Abs-HuangLanShiang.doc>
- 39 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "George Town," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/230135/George-Town>
- 40 Lan-Shiang Huang, "A Comparison on the Urban Spatial Structures of the British Colonial Port Cities among Calcutta, George Town and Singapore," (paper presented at The Penang Story – International Conference, 18–21 April 2002), 4, <http://www.penangstory.net.my/docs/Abs-HuangLanShiang.doc>
- 41 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "George Town," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/230135/George-Town>
- 42 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "George Town," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/230135/George-Town>
- 43 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Kota Kinabalu," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/322833/Kota-Kinabalu>
- 44 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Kota Kinabalu," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/322833/Kota-Kinabalu>

Kinabalu

- 45 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Kota Kinabalu,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/322833/Kota-Kinabalu>
- 46 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Kuching,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/324300/Kuching>
- 47 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Kuching,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/324300/Kuching>
- 48 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Kuching,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/324300/Kuching>
- 49 My Malasia Paradise, “Kuching,” 2006, <http://www.mymalasiaparadise.com/Kuching.html>
- 50 My Malasia Paradise, “Kuching,” 2006, <http://www.mymalasiaparadise.com/Kuching.html>
- 51 Christopher Yeoh, “Malaysia, Truly Asia? Religious Pluralism in Malaysia,” (paper, The Pluralism Project, Harvard University, n.d.), http://pluralism.org/research/reports/yeoh/Pluralism_Malaysia.doc
- 52 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Malaysia: Prehistory and the Rise of Indianized States,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52554/Prehistory-and-the-rise-of-Indianized-states>
- 53 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Malaysia: Prehistory and the Rise of Indianized States,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52554/Prehistory-and-the-rise-of-Indianized-states>
- 54 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Malaysia: Prehistory and the Rise of Indianized States,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52554/Prehistory-and-the-rise-of-Indianized-states>
- 55 Lost Islamic History, “The Sultanate of Malacca,” n.d., <http://lostislamichistory.com/sultanate-of-malacca/>
- 56 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Malaysia: The Advent of Islam,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52555/The-advent-of-Islam>
- 57 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Malaysia: Early European Intrusions and Emerging Sultanates,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52556/Early-European-intrusions-and-emerging-sultanates>
- 58 Lost Islamic History, “The Sultanate of Malacca,” n.d., <http://lostislamichistory.com/sultanate-of-malacca/>
- 59 Richard Cavendish, “Malayan Independence,” *History Today* 57, no. 8 (2007), <http://www.historytoday.com/richard-cavendish/malayan-independence>
- 60 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Malaysia: Malaya and Northern Borneo Under British Control,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52556/Early-European-intrusions-and-emerging-sultanates>
- 61 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Malaysia: Malaya and Northern Borneo Under British Control,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52556/Early-European-intrusions-and-emerging-sultanates>
- 62 Richard Cavendish, “Malayan Independence,” *History Today* 57, no. 8 (2007), <http://www.historytoday.com/richard-cavendish/malayan-independence>
- 63 Wikimedia, “British Malaya Circa 1922,” 29 January 2007, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British_Malaya_circa_1922.PNG
- 64 Khoo Boo Teik, “Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance in the Public Sector: Malaysian Experiences,” (paper, UN Research Institute for Social Development, 15 December 2005), 8-10, [http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/tt_pNetITFramePDF?ReadForm&parentunid=19309421DF6D65D3C12570FA00392E12&parentdoctype=paper&netitpath=80256B3C005BCCF9/%28httpAuxPages%29/19309421D-F6D65D3C12570FA00392E12/\\$file/Khoo%20%28small%29.pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/tt_pNetITFramePDF?ReadForm&parentunid=19309421DF6D65D3C12570FA00392E12&parentdoctype=paper&netitpath=80256B3C005BCCF9/%28httpAuxPages%29/19309421D-F6D65D3C12570FA00392E12/$file/Khoo%20%28small%29.pdf)
- 65 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Malaysia: The Impact of British Rule,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52561/The-impact-of-British-rule>
- 66 Martin Rudner, “Chapter 3: Agricultural Policy and Peasant Social Transformation in Late Colonial Malaya,” in *Malaysian Development: A Retrospective* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1994), 54.
- 67 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Malaysia: The Impact of British Rule,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/>

[topic/359754/Malaysia/52561/The-impact-of-British-rule](#)

68 Diane Mauzy, "Chapter 3: From Malay Nationalism to Malay Nation?" in *After Independence: Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial and Postcommunist States*, Lowell Barrington, ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 48, <http://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/0472098985-ch3.pdf>

69 Wonderful Malaysia, "Malaysia Under British Ruling," 2014, <http://www.wonderfulmalaysia.com/malaysia-history-and-historical-facts.htm>

70 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Malaysia: Political Transformation," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52562/Political-transformation>

71 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Malaysia: Political Transformation," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52562/Political-transformation>

72 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Malaysia: Political Transformation," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52562/Political-transformation>

73 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Malaysia: Political Transformation," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52562/Political-transformation>

74 Timothy Daniels, "Chapter 2: Melaka Past and Present, Cultural Citizenship and Race Making," in *Building Cultural Nationalism in Malaysia: Identity, Representation and Citizenship* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 40-41.

75 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Malaysia: Political Transformation," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52562/Political-transformation>

76 Wonderful Malaysia, "Malaysia Under British Ruling," 2014, <http://www.wonderfulmalaysia.com/malaysia-history-and-historical-facts.htm>

77 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Malaysia: Malaysia from Independence to c. 2000), 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/279192/Malaysia-from-independence-to-c-2000>

78 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Malaysia: Malaysia from Independence to c. 2000), 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/279192/Malaysia-from-independence-to-c-2000>

[independence-to-c-2000](#)

79 John Hillely, "Chapter 3: Mahathirism and the Politics of the Power Bloc," in *Malaysia: Mahathirism, Hegemony and the New Opposition* (London: Zed Books, 2001), 83.

80 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Malaysia: Malaysia from Independence to c. 2000), 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/279192/Malaysia-from-independence-to-c-2000>

81 BBC, "Malaysia Profile: Timeline," 7 May 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-15391762>

82 BBC, "Malaysia Profile: Timeline," 7 May 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-15391762>

83 Teymoor Nabili, "Religious Tensions Rise in 'One Malaysia,'" *Al Jazeera*, 8 January 2010, <http://blogs.aljazeera.com/blog/asia/religious-tensions-rise-one-malaysia>

84 Razak Ahmad, "Analysis: Religious Tensions Simmer in Malaysia," *Reuters*, 10 September 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/11/us-malaysia-politics-idUSTRE78A0CY20110911>

85 BBC, "Malaysia Profile: Timeline," 7 May 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-15391762>

86 Kate Hodai, "Malaysian Police Fire Teargas at Electoral Reform Protesters," *The Guardian*, 28 April 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/apr/28/malaysian-police-fire-teargas-protesters>

87 Kieran Berboven, "Protests in Malaysia Demand the Rise of Free Elections and the Fall of Barisan Nasional," *PolicyMic*, 2 May 2012, <http://www.policymic.com/articles/7738/protests-in-malaysia-demand-the-rise-of-free-elections-and-the-fall-of-barisan-nasional>

88 Foong Pek Yee, "Malaysian Politics 2014: Tough Explaining Price Hikes to People, Says Dr Wee," *The Nation*, 6 January 2014, <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2014/01/06/Malaysian-politics-2014-Wee-Ka-Siong-MCA-Barisan-Nasional/>

89 Maplecroft, "Political Risk (Dynamic) Index 2014," 12 December 2013, <http://maplecroft.com/portfolio/new-analysis/2013/12/12/instability-and-conflict-mena-and-east->

[africa-drive-global-rise-political-risk-maplecroft-bpolitical-risk-atlas-2014b/](#)

90 AMB Country Risk Report, “Malaysia,” 24 September 2013, <http://www3.ambest.com/ratings/cr/reports/malaysia.pdf>

91 AustralianPolitics, “Key Terms: Westminster System,” n.d., <http://www.australianpolitics.com/democracy/terms/westminster-system.shtml>

92 Central Intelligence Agency, “Malaysia: Government,” in The World Factbook, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

93 International Business Publications, “Government,” in Malaysia: Land Ownership and Agricultural Laws Handbook, Vol. 1 (Washington DC: International Business Publications, USA), 22.

94 Central Intelligence Agency, “Malaysia: Government,” in The World Factbook, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

95 Central Intelligence Agency, “Malaysia: Government,” in The World Factbook, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

96 International Business Publications, “Government,” in Malaysia: Land Ownership and Agricultural Laws Handbook, Vol. 1 (Washington DC: International Business Publications, USA), 22.

97 Central Intelligence Agency, “Malaysia: Government,” in The World Factbook, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

98 Central Intelligence Agency, “Malaysia: Government,” in The World Factbook, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

99 Central Intelligence Agency, “Malaysia: Government,” in The World Factbook, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

100 The Official Portal of the Parliament of Malaysia, “Senate: General Information,” 18 March 2013, <http://www.parlimen.gov.my/maklumat-umum.html?uweb=dn&lang=en>

101 Central Intelligence Agency, “Malaysia: Government,” in The World Factbook, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

[library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html](#)

102 Official Portal of the Parliament of Malaysia, “House of Representatives: General Information,” 19 March 2013, <http://www.parlimen.gov.my/maklumat-umum.html?uweb=dr&>

103 Central Intelligence Agency, “Malaysia: Government,” in The World Factbook, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

104 Office of the Chief Registrar, Federal Court of Malaysia, “Malaysian Judicial Structure,” (paper, n.d.), 15-17, <http://www.kehakiman.gov.my/sites/default/files/document3/POJ-LAPORAN%20TAHUNAN/ENGLISH/IA-PT2.pdf>

105 Central Intelligence Agency, “Malaysia: Government,” in The World Factbook, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

106 European Country of Origin Information Network, “2012 International Religious Freedom Report-Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/247558/357818_en.html

107 Reporters Without Borders, “2013 World Press Freedom Index: Dashed Hopes After Spring,” 2013, <http://en.rsf.org/press-freedom-index-2013,1054.html>

108 Freedom House, “Malaysia: Freedom of the Press 2013,” n.d., <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2013/malaysia>

109 Freedom House, “Malaysia: Freedom of the Press 2013,” n.d., <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2013/malaysia>

110 Freedom House, “Malaysia: Freedom of the Press 2013,” n.d., <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2013/malaysia>

111 Central Intelligence Agency, “Malaysia: Communications,” in The World Factbook, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

112 Freedom House, “Malaysia: Freedom of the Press 2013,” n.d., <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2013/malaysia>

113 Freedom House, “Malaysia: Freedom of the Press 2013,” n.d., <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2013/malaysia>

[malaysia](#)

114 Freedom House, "Malaysia: Freedom of the Press 2013," n.d., <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2013/malaysia>

115 Freedom House, "Malaysia: Freedom of the Press 2013," n.d., <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2013/malaysia>

116 Freedom House, "Malaysia: Freedom on the Net 2013," n.d., <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2013/malaysia>

117 Freedom House, "Malaysia: Freedom on the Net 2013," n.d., <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2013/malaysia>

118 Central Intelligence Agency, "Malaysia: Economy," in The World Factbook, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

119 John V. Mitchell and Daniela Schmidt, "Resource Depletion, Dependence and Development: Malaysia," (working paper, Chatham House, November 2008), 6, http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Energy,%20Environment%20and%20Development/13519_1108rddd_malaysia1.pdf

120 The World Bank, Malaysia Economic Monitor, (report, June 2013), 6, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2013/07/02/000442464_20130702112156/Rendered/PDF/791540WP0P1325370MEM80377356B00PUBLIC0.pdf

121 The World Bank, Malaysia Economic Monitor, (report, June 2013), 7-8, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2013/07/02/000442464_20130702112156/Rendered/PDF/791540WP0P1325370MEM80377356B00PUBLIC0.pdf

122 Department of Statistics Malaysia, Official Portal, "Principal Statistics of Labour Force, Malaysia, October 2013," in Siaran Bulanan 53, Vol. 12 (December 2013), 2, http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/images/stories/files/LatestReleases/Oct_2013BI.pdf

123 Economic Transformation Programme, "Chapter 1: New

Economic Model of Malaysia," in A Roadmap for Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia National Transformation Program, n.d.), 59-60, 62, http://etp.pemandu.gov.my/upload/etp_handbook_chapter_1-4_economic_model.pdf

124 The World Bank, Malaysia Economic Monitor, (report, June 2013), 16-17, 31, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2013/07/02/000442464_20130702112156/Rendered/PDF/791540WP0P1325370MEM80377356B00PUBLIC0.pdf

125 Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2012 Investment Climate Statement-Malaysia," June 2012, <http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2012/191191.htm>

126 Asian Development Bank, "Malaysia," in Asian Development Outlook 2013 Update: Governance and Public Service Delivery (Manila, Philippines: Asian Development, 2013), 151-152, <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/pub/2013/ado2013-update.pdf#page=139>

127 Central Intelligence Agency, "Malaysia: People and Society," in The World Factbook, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

128 David Martin Jones, "Malaysia's Dilemma," Austral Peace and Security Network Policy Forum 8 (21 February 2008), <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan037394.pdf>

129 Malaysia Factbook, "Malay Malaysian," n.d. http://malaysiafactbook.com/Malay_Malaysian

130 David Martin Jones, "Malaysia's Dilemma," Austral Peace and Security Network Policy Forum 8 (21 February 2008), <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan037394.pdf>

131 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Malaysia: Ethnic Groups and Languages," 2013, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52533/Ethnic-groups-and-languages>

132 Robert Day McAmis, "Chapter 5: Islamic Resurgence Among Malay Muslims," in Malay Muslims: The History and Challenge of Resurgent Islam in Southeast Asia (Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Company 2002), 85.

- 133 Gin Ooi Keat, "Malays," in *Southeast Asia: A Historical Encyclopedia from Angkor Wat to East* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio Books, 2004), 843.
- 134 Anthony Reid, "Chapter 1: Understanding Malay (Malay) As a Source of Diverse Modern Identities," in *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity Across Borders*, ed. Timothy Barnard (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), 10. 135 Hussim Mutalib, "Chapter 2: Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia," in *Islam in Malaysia: From Revivalism to Islamic State* (Singapore: Bradford Press, 1993), 18.
- 136 Central Intelligence Agency, "Malaysia: People and Society," in *The World Factbook*, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>
- 137 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Malaysia: Ethnic Groups and Languages," 2013, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52533/Ethnic-groups-and-languages>
- 138 Vidhu Vermu, "Chapter 2: Nationalism and Nation-building," in *Malaysia, State and Civil Society in Transition* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner, 2002), 28.
- 139 John Nagl, "Chapter 4: British Army Counterinsurgency Learning During the Malayan Emergency, 1948–1951," in *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 63.
- 140 Philip Bowring, "Meanwhile: A Communist Guerrilla Looks Back at 80," *New York Times*, 1 October 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/01/opinion/01iht-edbowring_ed3.html
- 141 Greg Lopez, "The Internal Security Act in Malaysia: Abolish, Not Reform It," *East Asia Forum*, 27 August 2009, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2009/08/27/the-internal-security-act-in-malaysia-abolish-not-reform-it/>
- 142 World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, "Chinese," n.d., <http://www.minorityrights.org/4528/malaysia/chinese.html>
- 143 Jennifer Pak, "Is Malaysia University Entry a Level Playing Field?" *BBC News*, 1 September 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-23841888>
- 144 Karmveer Singh, "Challenges to the Rights of Malaysians of Indian Descent," *e-International Relations*, 6 February 2013, <http://www.e-ir.info/2013/02/06/challenges-to-the-rights-of-malaysians-of-indian-descent/>
- 145 Central Intelligence Agency, "Malaysia: People and Society," in *The World Factbook*, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>
- 146 Vinay Lal, "Multiculturalism at Risk: The Indian Minority in Malaysia," *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, no. 35 (2 September 2006), 3764-3765, <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/Diaspora/multicultiatriisk.htm>
- 147 Karmveer Singh, "Challenges to the Rights of Malaysians of Indian Descent," *e-International Relations*, 6 February 2013, <http://www.e-ir.info/2013/02/06/challenges-to-the-rights-of-malaysians-of-indian-descent/>
- 148 Malaysia Factbook, "Indian Malaysian," 7 September 2013, http://malaysiafactbook.com/Indian_Malaysian
- 149 Pranav Kumar, "Malaysia: Majority Supremacy and Ethnic Tensions," *Institute of Peace and conflict Studies*, n.d., <http://www.ipcs.org/special-report/southeast-asia/malaysia-majority-supremacy-and-ethnic-tensions-134.html>
- 150 Karmveer Singh, "Challenges to the Rights of Malaysians of Indian Descent," *e-International Relations*, 6 February 2013, <http://www.e-ir.info/2013/02/06/challenges-to-the-rights-of-malaysians-of-indian-descent/>
- 151 Andrew Willford, "Chapter 2: Marginal Existence and Social Distance: 'Worthless Dregs in a Prosperous Society,'" in *Cage of Freedom: Tamil Identity and the Ethnic Fetish in Malaysia* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2007), 16-17. 152 Simon Montlake, "Temple Demolitions Anger Malaysian Indians," *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 February 2008, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0207/p04s01-woap.html>
- 153 Thomas Fuller, "Indian Discontent Fuels Malaysia's Rising Tensions," *New York Times*, 10 February 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/10/world/asia/10malaysia.html>
- 154 Chee-Beng Tan, "Ethnic Groups, Ethnogenesis and Ethnic Identities: Some Examples from Malaysia," (paper, Department of Anthropology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1997), 8, 14–15, <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/publish/>

[workingpaper5.pdf](#)

155 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples-Malaysia" Orang Asli, 2008, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/49749ce85.html>

156 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples-Malaysia" Orang Asli, 2008, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/49749ce85.html>

157 Alberto G. Gomes, "The Orang Asli of Malaysia," International Institute for Asian Studies Newsletter no. 35, November 2004, http://www.ias.nl/nl/35/IIAS_NL35_10.pdf

158 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples-Malaysia" Orang Asli, 2008, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/49749ce85.html>

159 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples-Malaysia" Orang Asli, 2008, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/49749ce85.html>

160 Chee-Beng Tan, "Ethnic Groups, Ethnogenesis and Ethnic Identities: Some Examples from Malaysia," (paper, Department of Anthropology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1997), 12-13, <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/publish/workingpaper5.pdf>

161 World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, "Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities in Malaysia," 2006, <http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=4540>

162 James B. Minahan, "Dayaks," in Ethnic Groups of South Asia and the Pacific: An Encyclopedia (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO LLC, 2012), 67.

163 Chee-Beng Tan, "Ethnic Groups, Ethnogenesis and Ethnic Identities: Some Examples from Malaysia," (paper, Department of Anthropology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1997), 12-13, <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/publish/workingpaper5.pdf>

164 World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, "Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities in Malaysia," 2006, <http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=4540>

165 James B. Minahan, "Dayaks," in Ethnic Groups of South Asia and the Pacific: An Encyclopedia (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO LLC, 2012), 68.

166 World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, "Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities in Malaysia," 2006, <http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=4540>

167 Chee-Beng Tan, "Ethnic Groups, Ethnogenesis and Ethnic Identities: Some Examples from Malaysia," (paper, Department of Anthropology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1997), 12-13, <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/publish/workingpaper5.pdf>

168 World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, "Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities in Malaysia," 2006, <http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=4540>

169 World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, "Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities in Malaysia," 2006, <http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=4540>

170 World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, "Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities in Malaysia," 2006, <http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=4540>

171 James B. Minahan, "Dayaks," in Ethnic Groups of South Asia and the Pacific: An Encyclopedia (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO LLC, 2012), 68.

172 Chee-Beng Tan, "Ethnic Groups, Ethnogenesis and Ethnic Identities: Some Examples from Malaysia," (paper, Department of Anthropology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1997), 12-13, <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/publish/workingpaper5.pdf>

Overview: Chapter 1 Assessment

1. Malaysia is approximately the size of New Mexico.

TRUE

Malaysia is a small country by the standards of Southeast Asia. Slightly larger than New Mexico, Malaysia is half the size of Burma, two-thirds the size of Thailand, and one-sixth the size of Indonesia.

2. Peninsular Malaysia has a single rainy and a single dry season.

FALSE

There are generally two dry periods on Peninsular Malaysia, which alternate with two rainy periods. The driest months are June and July with a secondary dry spell in February, for most of the most of the peninsula.

3. All ethnic Malays are Muslim.

TRUE

The legal definition offered by the nation's constitution states that a Malaysian Malay is "a person born to a Malaysian citizen who professes to be a Muslim; habitually speaks the Malay language; adheres to customs; and is domiciled in Malaysia or Singapore.

4. The modern nation of Malaysia was founded in 1957.

FALSE

The peninsula and Malaysia became independent under the name "Federation of Malaysia in 1948. The new federation called Malaysia was established in September 1963, which united Malaysia, Singapore, and the eastern states of Sarawak and Sabah on the island of Borneo.

5. Most of the power of the central government lies with the Monarch.

FALSE

The chief of state is a largely ceremonial position filled by the Sultan who is elected from among the nine hereditary rulers. The position of sultan rotates among the states.



Muslim girls in Malaysia
© syronicca / flickr.com

Chapter 2: Religion

Introduction

Malaysia is a country of multiple faiths. Approximately 60% of the population is Muslim, 19% Buddhist, 9% Christian, and 6% Hindu.¹ The official religion is Islam, while the constitution provides for the practice of other religions.² Sultans are the highest Islamic authority in nine Malaysian states, while kings are the highest Islamic authority in the remaining four states and federal territories.³

Malaysia has experienced an Islamic revival over the last decades.^{4,5} More women now wear hijab, the Islamic veil, outside the home. There is also an increase in the use of Shari'a, or Islamic law, to regulate the social behavior of Muslims.⁶ This phenomenon has been attributed to multiple influences. The rural-to-urban Malay migration that began in the 1970s is thought to be one influence. This migration brought Muslims and non-Muslims in close daily contact with one another, prompting a renewed interest

in religious practices. Additionally, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad used Islam to promote capitalist development during his long tenure in power (1981-2003).⁷

The rise in political Islam has led to religious tensions across Malaysia. Such tensions are especially persistent between the Sunni and Shi'a communities, and between Muslims and other religious groups.^{8,9,10} Recent court decisions determined which groups can use the word "Allah" to refer to God. This led to a number of demonstrations and the seizure of bibles.^{11,12,13} To some extent, religious tensions can be traced to ethnicity, rather than religion. Ethnic Muslim Malays continue to benefit from legal and social advantages, while other Muslim and non-Muslim ethnic groups are increasingly marginalized.¹⁴



Crowd at Mecca
© Ariandra 03 / Wikipedia.org

Islam in Malaysia

Islam arrived in Malaysia from India around the 13th century. Islam became firmly established in the 14th century with the arrival of Prince Parameswara, a Javanese prince who was forced out of his homeland. He converted to Islam soon after arriving and establishing the town of Malacca in 1403. Malacca soon developed it into a flourishing trade center and Muslims quickly dominated trade in the area. This helped spread Islam throughout the region.^{15,16,17}

The residents of Malacca began to refer to themselves as Malays (*Melayu*), sometime in the 15th century. Since then, the term "Malay" has been applied to anyone who practiced Islam and spoke the Malay language. This meant that "Malay" was largely a religious and linguistic designation.¹⁸ This legacy persists and has been enshrined in the constitution. All Malays are legally defined as Muslim from birth. The renunciation of one's religious faith (apostasy) is nearly impossible and is punishable in most states.^{19,20,21,22} Most of the nation's Muslims are Sunni and follow the Shafi Madhab school.^{23,24} Shi'ites are a minority, consisting of approximately 200,000 people.²⁵

Muslims follow the five Pillars of Islam. These include the declaration of faith (*shahada*); 5 daily prayers (*salat* or *sembahyang*); fasting during the holy month of Ramadan (*sawm*) if one is physically fit; making a pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*) if one is physically able and can afford it, and the giving of alms (*zakat*).^{26,27} The *zakat* is customarily set at 2.5 percent of household income after expenses. The government has recommended levels based on the number of people in the household. In Malaysia, collection of the

zakat is handled by state-level religious councils (*Majlis Agama*). Muslims may go there and pay the *zakat* or give directly to a charity of their choice. Recent data show that 93% of Malay Muslims comply with *zakat*.^{28,29} Among Malaysia's middle class, making more than one *hajj* has become commonplace.³⁰

Malaysia's Muslims show strong commitment to the five Pillars of Islam. Some 98% of Malaysia's Muslim population believes in one God, and that Muhammad is His prophet (*shahada*).³¹ Approximately 90% also say that religion is very important in their lives.³² Nearly 80% pray several times a day, although 43% do not attend mosque regularly.³³



Boys reading from the quran
© Lan Rasso

Care and Treatment of the Quran

The Quran is Islam's holy book. It is regarded as sacred and should be treated with respect. It should not be touched with dirty hands and should be kept off the floor and out of latrines. The Quran should be held above one's lap or waist when sitting on the floor. The Quran should be protected with a dustcover when not in use and nothing should be placed on top of the Quran. Muslims often keep the Quran on the highest shelf of a bookcase.³⁴

Old or damaged Qurans can be properly disposed of in one of two ways: burning or burying.

Burning is acceptable if the process is conducted with respect. Texts should not be burned with trash or other items. Burying the Quran begins with wrapping it in something clean, before placing it in the ground where people do not walk.^{35, 36}

Religion and Government

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion, yet it also places restrictions on those freedoms.³⁷ For example, the government endorses Sunni Islam since it is the official state religion. Consequently, Shi'ites often face restrictions on their religious practices.³⁸ All citizens must carry identity cards that specify religious affiliations.³⁹ Muslims are under the jurisdiction of Shari'a civil courts. Non-Muslim citizens are under the jurisdiction of a parallel civil court system.⁴⁰ The government restricts religious assembly and denies legal status to certain religious groups.⁴¹ Some religious groups are listed as "deviant sects," because the government believes they are a threat to national security. Shi'ites are high on this list and in 2011 were banned from proselytizing (Sunnis are allowed to



Malaysian flag at State Government Building
© Haydn Blackey

proselytize).^{42, 43}

Federal and state officials oversee Islamic activities. This oversight includes the content of sermons, the use of mosques. Federal and state officials can place bans on some imams to keep them from speaking at public mosques.⁴⁴ Religious instruction is compulsory for Muslim children attending public schools.⁴⁵ All Muslim civil servants are required to attend approved religion classes.⁴⁶

Religion in Daily Life

Religion is a central feature of life in Malaysia and the Islamic revival has created a more conservative society. Religion influences legal policies and practices and diet, such as a prohibition on the consumption of alcohol.^{47, 48, 49} Most Malays pray five times a day and fast during the month of Ramadan. A majority tithe some income to pay the *zakat*, or alms to the poor.^{50, 51, 52}

Malaysia's "morality police" are a constant presence. Officers can raid events they find offensive to Islam, or enforce dress and social interaction codes.^{53, 54, 55} Shari'a law is also used to enforce Islamic prohibitions on sex outside of marriage. For example, on New Year's Day 2010, police swept through budget hotels in Selangor state and detained 52 Malay Muslim couples who could not produce proof of marriage.⁵⁶

Non-Muslims must first convert to Islam in order to marry a Muslim, and to have their marriage legally recognized.⁵⁷



Women in mosque
© Lan Rasso

Religion and Gender

Muslim Malaysian women have traditionally enjoyed more rights and privileges than in other Muslim majority nations. Historically, Muslim Malay society recognized women's roles in public places and their right to be treated as independent individuals. They could own and inherit property, and they could work outside the home.⁵⁸ Things began to change, however, in the 1970s with the rise of political Islam.^{59, 60}

The rise of political Islam has changed the ways in which women interact outside their homes.^{61, 62,}

⁶³ Women are now encouraged, but not required to wear the Islamic veil (*hijab* or *tudung*) in most

Malaysian states.⁶⁴ However, in Kelantan state women are now required to cover all but hands and faces. Their freedom of movement is also restricted and it is illegal for girls to have short hair.⁶⁵

The Kelantan government also introduced policies of gender segregation. This is relatively new in Malay Islam. This policy requires that women sit apart from men when attending public and social activities. The state has also implemented separate supermarket check-out lines for men and women. Some of these practices have spread to the other states and federal territories.^{66, 67} Segregation rules in the state of Kelantan are now applicable in some situations for all people, regardless of their religion.⁶⁸



Wesak Day in Kuala Lumpur
© Kamal Sellehuddin

Religious Events and Holidays

Malaysians celebrate several regional and federal holidays.⁶⁹ These include Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic holidays. The Christian holidays of Good Friday, Easter, and Christmas are regional holidays celebrated among the nation's Christian population in Sabah and Sarawak.^{70, 71}

The Buddhist holiday of Wesak Day (13 May 2014) as well as the Hindu holidays of Deepavali (23 October 2014) and Thaipusam (17 January 2014) are also observed.^{72, 73, 74} Wesak Day is known as Buddha's Birthday. It honors his birth,

enlightenment, and death. The day is marked with a ritual bathing of Buddha, giving of alms, and meditation on Buddha's eight precepts.⁷⁵

Deepavali marks the beginning of the Hindu new year and is known as the festival of lights. It commemorates the return of Lord Rama and his wife following a 14-year exile and signifies the triumph of good over evil. Malaysian Hindus celebrate by inviting friends of different faiths to an open house to build ethnic and racial harmony.⁷⁶

Thaipusam is another Hindu holiday. It marks a day to give thanks to Lord Subramanian and to give penance. It is marked by parades and ceremonial rituals, and is celebrated only in Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, Johor, Negeri Sembilan, Perak, Penang and Selangor. One million people gather each year at the Batu Caves in Kuala Lumpur to give thanks and give penance.⁷⁷

The first national Islamic holiday of the year is *Maulidur Rasul* or the Prophet's Birthday, on 14 January.⁷⁸ This is considered a minor holiday and is marked by prayers and reminders to Muslims to be more tolerant and understanding.⁷⁹ Several regional Islamic holidays are also observed. *Israk dan Mikraj* (27 May 2014) is a local observance that commemorates the night Muhammad ascended into heaven and returned to earth. *Israk dan Mikraj* is observed in Kedah, Negeri Sembilan, and Perlis.^{80, 81}



Breaking the fast for Ramadan
© Vernon Chan

Ramadan

The most important religious month for Muslims is Ramadan. Islamic holidays are reckoned using a lunar calendar, which means that the beginning date for holidays changes from year to year. For example, *Awal Ramadan* begins on 29 June in 2014, but began on 10 July in 2013.⁸²

Ramadan is a time of self-reflection, private prayer (*doa*) and an opportunity to increase one's piety and faith.^{83, 84} Fasting (*sawm*) during the lunar month of Ramadan (*Bulan Puasa*) is one of the pillars of faith, and nearly 99% of Malaysian Muslims observe prayer and fasting during the

month of Ramadan.⁸⁵ Ramadan fasting means one must abstain from food, drink, and sex from sunrise to sunset. People may be more irritable during the day and many public offices shorten their hours, particularly as the month progresses. The sick, old, and very young are exempted from fasting, as are pregnant, nursing, and menstruating women.⁸⁶

Muslims seen eating or drinking on the street during daylight hours are subject to a fine or detention. The daylight fast ends each evening at sunset with a meal known as *iftar*. Iftar is usually eaten at home or at special food bazaars that are abundant during Ramadan. Many remain open throughout the night and attract both Muslim and non-Muslim customers.⁸⁷

The special night called *Nuzul al Quran* falls towards the end of Ramadan. It commemorates the day the Quran was first revealed. *Nuzul al Quran* is celebrated in most states and federal territories throughout the country.^{88, 89, 90}



Decorated Table
© Irangilaneh / Wikipedia.org

Hari Raya Puasa (Eid Al-Fidr)

The two-day holiday of *Hari Raya (Eid)Puasa*, (28-29 July 2014) marks the end of Ramadan.⁹¹
⁹² It is a festive celebration, with people wearing bright-colored traditional clothing. Most people return to their native villages, or travel to the city to visit family and friends. Celebrations often last for a week. Malays begin the first day after the end of Ramadan in the mosque for morning prayers, then return home for a family breakfast. Younger members of the family seek blessings from their elders by kissing their hands and wishing them a happy holiday (*Selamat Hari Raya*). Children receive packets of money from their elders.

The Malays might have borrowed this tradition from the Chinese, who give children red envelopes with money on the first day of the lunar New Year. This is followed by a visit to the cemetery. In the past it was common for Malays to leave water and food items, and to read a chapter from the Quran to the deceased. These practices have been discouraged in recent times, because they are considered non-Islamic. They are believed to be a legacy of animist traditions, in which people believed that the living could communicate with the dead. Muslim Malays are now encouraged to say a *doa* directly to Allah on behalf of the deceased.^{93, 94, 95}

Exchange 1: Will you be celebrating Eid?

Soldier:	Will you be celebrating Eid?	aandaa aakaan menyaambot haaree raaya aaydeel-fitree?
Local:	Yes!	ya!



Preparing for the symbolic sacrifice
© C.K. Koay

Hari Raya Haji (Eid al-Adha)

Eid al-Adha marks the end of hajj, the holy pilgrimage to Mecca. This holiday falls in the 12th month of the Islamic lunar year.⁹⁶ It is customary for Malays to wear new clothes during this holiday, visit family and friends, and attend prayers at the mosque to commemorate the willingness of the Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son, Ishmael. Ibrahim, also known as Abraham in the Christian and Jewish traditions, was commanded to sacrifice his son to Allah. He obeyed and took Ishmael to be sacrificed, but an angel intervened and gave him a ram to sacrifice instead. It was then revealed to Ibrahim that this was a test of

his faith.⁹⁷ Muslims celebrate this day by sacrificing an animal to commemorate Allah's mercy. After prayers are performed in the mosque, men participate in sacrificial rites (*korban*), in which sheep, rams, goats, and cows are slaughtered. The meat is then distributed to family, friends, and the poor.^{98, 99}

Places of Worship

Mosques are Islamic places of worship. Approximately 57% of Malaysia's Muslims attend mosque at least once a week.¹⁰⁰ Most Malaysian mosques are white, and reflect a variety of architectural styles that are attributed to Malaysia's multi-ethnic colonial heritage.

The earliest Malaysian mosques were built on raised columns, like Malay houses. However, Moorish and Mughal influenced mosques were constructed over the subsequent centuries.^{101, 102}

Mosques built during British colonization of Malaysia are distinctly different, often typified by domes, turrets, classical columns, and pointed arches. The Sultan Abu Bakar Mosque in Johor Bahru is an excellent example of a colonial mosque.¹⁰³

Modern Malaysian mosques are often built in one of two styles: those emphasizing new building technology, and those inspired by the Middle East and Northern Africa. An example of the first style of a modern Malaysian mosque is the National Mosque in Kuala Lumpur, constructed from reinforced marble. An example of the second type of a modern Malaysian mosque is the Sultan Abdul Aziz Mosque in Shah Alam, inspired by Ottoman mosques in Istanbul.¹⁰⁴

Exchange 2: When do you pray?

Soldier:	When do you pray?	beela aandaa sembaah-yaang?
Local:	We pray five times a day.	kaamee sembaah-yaang leema kaalee sehaaree.



National Mosque, Kuala Lumpur
© Colocho / Wikipedia.org

The Putra Masjid is a “mega-mosque” with a minaret measuring 116 m (380 ft.) high. It was built the new federal administrative center of Putrajaya, located near Kuala Lumpur. It can accommodate 15,000 worshippers and has additional space outside for tens of thousands more.¹⁰⁵ Several recently constructed mosques feature Chinese pagoda-style roofs, rather than domes and minarets. Its unique design is intended to attract both local and foreign visitors, and to promote the region as a duty free zone.^{106, 107}

Most mosques share similar features regardless of architectural style. For example, mosques feature a *qibla* wall facing Mecca. They also feature a small niche called the *mihrab*, which is carved in the qibla wall to help worshippers find the proper direction in which to face during prayers. To the

right of the mihrab stands a pulpit, or *minbar*, where the imam stands while giving a sermon. Many mosques also have an ablution fountain in the center of the courtyard (*sahan*). This is where Muslims attending the mosque conduct ritual washing before prayers.^{108, 109}

Behavior in Places of Worship

Visitors are often welcome in Malaysian mosques, but in a few cases non-Muslim women may be denied mosque entrance.¹¹⁰ In other mosques, non-Muslim women who are inappropriately dressed may be allowed entrance if they wear a headscarf and don the long cloak and slippers that are provided by a mosque attendant. Non-Muslims may not enter mosques during prayer times and may never enter the prayer hall.¹¹¹

Exchange 3: Is this acceptable to wear?

Soldier:	Is this acceptable to wear?	paakaayaan begenee boleh dee paakaay?
Local:	Yes.	Ya.

All visitors to mosques are required to cover their arms and legs. Men should wear long pants and a shirt, preferably with long sleeves but short sleeves are acceptable.^{112, 113, 114} Shoes must be removed before entering the mosque.¹¹⁵

Exchange 4: Do I need to cover my head?

Soldier:	Do I need to cover my head?	aada kaa saaya haaros menootoop kepaala?
Local:	No.	Teedaak.

Exchange 5: Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?

Soldier:	Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?	mastee kaa saaya mambooka kaasot beela dee daalaam maasjid?
Local:	Yes, here are slippers.	ya, inee aada sleepaa.

Inside the mosque, visitors should take care not to walk in front of worshippers because this invalidates their prayers.¹¹⁶



Putra Mosque
© BarbicanMan / flickr.com

Endnotes

- 1 Central Intelligence Agency, “Malaysia: People and Society,” in *The World Factbook*, 6 December 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>
- 2 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>
- 3 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>
- 4 Timo Kortteinen, “Islamic Resurgence and the Ethnicization of the Malaysian State: The Case of Lina Joy,” *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 23, no. 2 (October 2008): 218.
- 5 Jennifer Pak, “Rise of Strict Islam Exposes Tensions in Malaysia,” BBC News, 26 August 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-radio-and-tv-14649841>
- 6 Jennifer Pak, “Rise of Strict Islam Exposes Tensions in Malaysia,” BBC News, 26 August 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-radio-and-tv-14649841>
- 7 Sylva Frisk, “Chapter 4: Religious Duties and Acts of Worship,” in *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*, (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2009), 109.
- 8 Oxford Analytica, “Religious Tensions Mar Post-poll Politics in Malaysia,” Daily Brief, 17 September 2013, <https://www.oxan.com/display.aspx?ItemID=DB185924>
- 9 Peter Dziejdzic, “Defining God: Revealing the Poverty of Religious Literacy,” Huffington Post, 16 October 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peter-dziejdzic/defining-god-revealing-th_b_4102722.html
- 10 Sheridan Mahavera, “Ignorance, Extremist Sunnis Fuelling Anti-Shia Sentiments in Malaysia, Says Academic,” *The Malaysian Insider*, 12 December 2013, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/ignorance-extremist-sunnis-fuelling-anti-shia-sentiments-in-malaysia-says-a>
- 11 Simon Roughnead, “Ahead of Elections, Religious Tensions in Malaysia,” *National Catholic Register*, 6 March 2013, <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/ahead-of-elections-religious-tensions-in-malaysia>
- 12 Celine Fernandez, “Malaysia Religious Tensions Rise Around Use of ‘Allah,’” *Wall Street Journal*, 20 August 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887324747104579024583200404824>
- 13 Niluksi Koswanage, “Malaysia’s Islamic Authorities Seize Bibles as Allah Row Deepens,” Reuters, 2 January 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/02/us-malaysia-religion-idUSBREA010C120140102>
- 14 Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University, “Malaysia: Contemporary Affairs,” n.d., <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/essays/malaysia-contemporary-affairs>
- 15 Nazeer Ahmed, “Malaysia, Introduction of Islam into,” *History of Islam, An Encyclopedia of Islamic History*, n.d., <http://historyofislam.com/contents/the-post-mongol-period/malaysia-introduction-of-islam-into/>
- 16 Sabrizain, “H History of the Malay Peninsula: The Coming of Islam,” n.d., <http://www.sabrizain.org/malaya/islam.htm>
- 17 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Malaysia: The Advent of Islam,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52555/The-advent-of-Islam>
- 18 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Malaysia: The Advent of Islam,” 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52555/The-advent-of-Islam>
- 19 “Doing the Impossible: Quitting Islam in Malaysia,” *Asia Sentinel*, 27 April 2007, http://www.asiasentinel.com/index.php?Itemid=34&id=466&option=com_content&task=view
- 20 Shamil Norshidi, “Is Malaysia the Israel of Islam?” *The Malaysian Insider*, 9 January 2014, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/sideviews/article/is-malaysia-the-israel-of-islam-shamil-norshidi>
- 21 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>
- 22 František Novotný, “Freedom of Religion Abuses

in Malaysia,” Global Politics, 2 October 2011, <http://www.globalpolitics.cz/clanky/freedom-of-religion-abuses-in-malaysia>

23 Sheridan Mahavera, “Ignorance, Extremist Sunnis Fuelling Anti-Shia Sentiments in Malaysia, Says Academic,” *The Malaysian Insider*, 12 December 2013, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/ignorance-extremist-sunnis-fuelling-anti-shia-sentiments-in-malaysia-says-a>

24 IslamCan, “Islam in Malaysia,” n.d., <http://www.islamcan.com/islamic-history/islam-in-malaysia.shtml#Us2L9LSwWcE>

25 Sheridan Mahavera, “Ignorance, Extremist Sunnis Fuelling Anti-Shia Sentiments in Malaysia, Says Academic,” *The Malaysian Insider*, 12 December 2013, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/ignorance-extremist-sunnis-fuelling-anti-shia-sentiments-in-malaysia-says-a>

26 Pew Research, “Chapter 2: Religious Commitment,” in *The World’s Muslims: Unity and Diversity*, (research report, Religion and Public Life Project, 9 August 2012), <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-2-religious-commitment/>

27 Sylva Frisk, “Chapter 4: Religious Duties and Acts of Worship,” in *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2009). 99-140.

28 Sylva Frisk, “Chapter 4: Religious Duties and Acts of Worship,” in *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2009). 99-140.

29 Pew Research, “Chapter 2: Religious Commitment,” in *The World’s Muslims: Unity and Diversity*, (research report, Religion and Public Life Project, 9 August 2012), <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-2-religious-commitment/>

30 Sylva Frisk, “Chapter 4: Religious Duties and Acts of Worship,” in *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2009). 99-140.

31 Pew Research, “Chapter 2: Religious Commitment,” in *The World’s Muslims: Unity and Diversity*, (research report,

Religion and Public Life Project, 9 August 2012), <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-2-religious-commitment/>

32 Pew Research, “Chapter 2: Religious Commitment,” in *The World’s Muslims: Unity and Diversity*, (research report, Religion and Public Life Project, 9 August 2012), <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-2-religious-commitment/>

33 Pew Research, “Chapter 2: Religious Commitment,” in *The World’s Muslims: Unity and Diversity*, (research report, Religion and Public Life Project, 9 August 2012), <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-2-religious-commitment/>

34 TRADOC DCSINT Handbook no. 2, “Arab Cultural Awareness: 58 Factsheets” (Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, January 2006), 40, www.fas.org/irp/agency/army/arabculture.pdf

35 Allison Keyes, “How to Properly Dispose of Sacred Texts,” National Public Radio, 24 February 2012, <http://www.npr.org/2012/02/24/147321213/how-to-properly-dispose-of-sacred-texts>

36 Whitney Eulich, “Quran Burning: What Is the Respectful Way to Dispose of Islam’s Holy Book?” *Christian Science Monitor*, 21 February 2012, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Global-News/2012/0221/Quran-burning-What-is-the-respectful-way-to-dispose-of-Islam-s-holy-book>

37 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>

38 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>

39 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>

40 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>

- 41 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>
- 42 Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University, “Malaysia: Religious Freedom in Malaysia,” n.d., <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/essays/malaysia-contemporary-affairs>
- 43 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>
- 44 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>
- 45 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>
- 46 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>
- 47 K. Romano-Young, “Malaysia: Daily Life,” in *World and Its Peoples: Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Brunei* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 1223.48
- Pew Research, “Chapter 2: Religious Commitment,” in *The World’s Muslims: Unity and Diversity*, (research report, Religion and Public Life Project, 9 August 2012), <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-2-religious-commitment/>
- 49 “Enforce Dress Code for Women to Curb Sexual Crimes, Says PAS Women’s Chief,” *The Malaysian Insider*, 11 July 2013, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/enforce-dress-code-for-women-to-curb-sexual-crimes-says-pas-womens-chief/>
- 50 Mohd. Shuhaimi Bin Haji Ishak and Osman Chuah Abdullah, “Islam and the Malay World: An Insight into the Assimilation of Islamic Values,” *World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization* 2, no. 2 (2012): 59-60, [http://idosi.org/wjihc/wjihc2\(2\)12/1.pdf](http://idosi.org/wjihc/wjihc2(2)12/1.pdf)
- 51 Sylva Frisk, “Chapter 4: Religious Duties and Acts of Worship,” in *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2009), 99-140.
- 52 Pew Research, “Chapter 2: Religious Commitment,” in *The World’s Muslims: Unity and Diversity*, (research report, Religion and Public Life Project, 9 August 2012), <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-2-religious-commitment/>
- 53 BBC News, “Malaysia Valentine’s Day Raids Lead to Mass Arrests,” 15 February 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12466875>
- 54 “Malaysian Police Arrest 52 Unmarried Muslim Couples for Being Alone Together in Hotel Rooms,” *Daily Mail*, 4 January 2010, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1240510/Malaysian-police-arrest-52-unmarried-Muslim-couples-hotel-rooms.html>
- 55 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>
- 56 New York Times, Associated Press. “52 Couples Face Jail for Hotel Liaisons.” 4 January 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2010/01/04/world/AP-AS-Malaysia-Amorous-Couples.html?ref=global-home>
- 57 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>
- 58 Rose Ismail, “Women and Islam in Malaysia,” *Newsbreak*, March 2004, http://kyotoreview.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/issue/issue4/article_348.html
- 59 Rose Ismail, “Women and Islam in Malaysia,” *Newsbreak*, March 2004, http://kyotoreview.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/issue/issue4/article_348.html
- 60 Tavaana, “Sisters in Islam: Protecting Women’s Rights in Malaysia,” 2013, <https://tavaana.org/en/content/sisters-islam-protecting-womens-rights-malaysia-0>
- 61 Zayn R. Kassam, Introduction,” in *Women and Islam*, Zayn Kassam ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-DLIO, 2010), xxi.
- 62 Norani Othman, “Muslim Women and the Challenge of Islamic Fundamentalism/Extremism: An Overview of

- Southeast Asian Muslim Women's Struggle for Human Rights and Gender Equality," *Women's Studies International Forum* 29, (2006): 341-345, <http://www.arrow.org.my/SRHRIR/MuslimWomenChallengeofIslamicFundamentalism2006.pdf>
- 63 The Equal Rights Trust, "2. Patterns of Discrimination and Inequality," in *Washing the Tigers: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Malaysia* (country report, London, November 2012), 49-51, <http://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/Malaysia%20CR%201.pdf>
- 64 Celine Fernandez, "Why Some Women Wear a Hijab and Some Don't," *Wall Street Journal*, 18 April 2011, <http://blogs.wsj.com/scene/2011/04/18/why-some-women-wear-a-hijab-and-some-dont/>
- 65 The Equal Rights Trust, "2. Patterns of Discrimination and Inequality," in *Washing the Tigers: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Malaysia* (country report, London, November 2012), 87, <http://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/Malaysia%20CR%201.pdf>
- 66 Norani Othman, "Muslim Women and the Challenge of Islamic Fundamentalism/Extremism: An Overview of Southeast Asian Muslim Women's Struggle for Human Rights and Gender Equality," *Women's Studies International Forum* 29, (2006): 341-342, <http://www.arrow.org.my/SRHRIR/MuslimWomenChallengeofIslamicFundamentalism2006.pdf>
- 67 Raina Ng, "Closing the Gender Gap," *The Edge*, 4 November 2011, <http://www.theedgemaalaysia.com/management/195658-closing-the-gender-gap.html>
- 68 Press Trust of India, "Malaysia Enforces Gender-Segregation Rule for Salons," *Business Standard*, 26 November 2012, http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/malaysia-enforces-gender-segregation-rule-for-salons-112112600326_1.html
- 69 Q++ Studio, "Malaysia Public Holidays 2014," <http://www.qppstudio.net/publicolidays2014/malaysia.htm>
- 70 Q++ Studio, "Malaysia Public Holidays 2014," <http://www.qppstudio.net/publicolidays2014/malaysia.htm>
- 71 Time and Date, "Holidays in Malaysia in 2014," <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/malaysia/>
- 72 U.S. Department of State, "2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia," 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>
- 73 Time and Date, "Diwali/Deepavali in Malaysia," 2014, <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/malaysia/deepavali>
- 74 Public Holidays Malaysia, "Thaipusam 2014)," n.d., <http://publicholidays.com.my/thaipusam/>
- 75 Wonderful Malaysia, "Wesak Day in Malaysia," n.d., <http://www.wonderfulmalaysia.com/attractions/wesak-day-in-malaysia.htm>
- 76 Public Holidays Malaysia, "Deepavali 2014," n.d., <http://publicholidays.com.my/deepavali/>
- 77 Public Holidays Malaysia, "Thaipusam 2014)," n.d., <http://publicholidays.com.my/thaipusam/>
- 78 Q++ Studio, "Malaysia Public Holidays 2014," <http://www.qppstudio.net/publicolidays2014/malaysia.htm>
- 79 Azmi Abdu Aziz, "Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)," Alliance University, College of Medical Sciences, n.d., <http://allianzeunicollege.edu.my/portal/media/540-prophet-muhammad-peace-be-upon-him.html>
- 80 Time and Date, "About Isra and Mi'raj," 2014, <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/malaysia/isra-miraj>
- 81 Q++ Studio, "Malaysia Public Holidays 2014," <http://www.qppstudio.net/publicolidays2014/malaysia.htm>
- 82 Q++ Studio, "Malaysia Public Holidays 2014," <http://www.qppstudio.net/publicolidays2014/malaysia.htm>
- 83 Qul, "Ramadan Fasting and the Purification (Cleansing) of Souls," 2014, <http://www.qul.org.au/islamic-occasions/holy-month-of-ramadan/1078-ramadan-fasting-and-the-purification-cleansing-of-souls>
- 84 Hamza Yusuf, "Ramadan and Purification," ARC London, n.d., <http://www.arclondon.org/the-month-of-ramadan/ramadan-and-purification-hamza-yusuf/>
- 85 Pew Research, "Chapter 2: Religious Commitment," in *The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity*, (research report, Religion and Public Life Project, 9 August 2012), <http://www>

pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-2-religious-commitment/

86 Sylva Frisk, "Chapter 4: Religious Duties and Acts of Worship," in *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2009), 120-122.

87 Michael Aquino, "Ramadan and Aidilfitri in Southeast Asia," About.com: Southeast Asia Travel, n.d., <http://goseasia.about.com/od/malaysianculturepeople/a/ramadan.htm>

88 "FT to Observe Nuzul Al-Quran as Holiday from 2014," The Star Online, 29 November 2013, <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2013/11/29/FT-to-observe-Nuzul-Al-Quran-as-holiday-from-2014.aspx/>

89 Q++ Studio, "Malaysia Public Holidays 2014," <http://www.qppstudio.net/publicholidays2014/malaysia.htm>

90 Time and Date, "Holidays in Malaysia in 2014," <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/malaysia/>

91 Q++ Studio, "Malaysia Public Holidays 2014," <http://www.qppstudio.net/publicholidays2014/malaysia.htm>

92 RegiTour, "Hari Raya Puasa," n.d., <http://www.regit.com/malaysia/festival/haripuas.htm>

93 Sylva Frisk, "Chapter 4: Religious Duties and Acts of Worship," in *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2009), 105.

94 RegiTour, "Hari Raya Puasa," n.d., <http://www.regit.com/malaysia/festival/haripuas.htm>

95 Calendar Labs, "Hari Raya Puasa," 19 August 2013, <http://www.calendarlabs.com/holidays/singapore/hari-raya-puasa.php>

96 Time and Date, "Holidays in Malaysia in 2014," <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/malaysia/>

97 Office Holidays, "Hari Raya Haji," n.d., <http://www.officeholidays.com/countries/singapore/harirayahaji.php>

98 Office Holidays, "Hari Raya Haji," n.d., <http://www.officeholidays.com/countries/singapore/harirayahaji.php>

99 Chris, "The Festival of Sacrifice: Celebrating Hari Raya

Haji 2013," THA Holiday, 2013, <http://thaholiday.com/the-festival-of-sacrifice-celebrating-hari-raya-haji-2013/>

100 Pew Research, "Chapter 2: Religious Commitment," in *The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity*, (research report, Religion and Public Life Project, 9 August 2012), <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-2-religious-commitment/>

101 Rick Gregory, "Foreign Occupation: Islamic Symbolism in Malaysia," *Islamica Magazine*, no. 15 (9 September 2007), <http://zainabdullah.wordpress.com/2007/09/09/mosque-architecture-in-malaysia/>

102 A. Ghafar Ahmad, "The Architectural Styles of Mosques in Malaysia: From Vernacular to Modern Structures," (paper presented at the Symposium on Mosque Architecture, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia 31 January-3 February 1999), <http://www.hbp.usm.my/conservation/SeminarPaper/PAPERRIYADH.html>

103 A. Ghafar Ahmad, "The Architectural Styles of Mosques in Malaysia: From Vernacular to Modern Structures," (paper presented at the Symposium on Mosque Architecture, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia 31 January-3 February 1999), <http://www.hbp.usm.my/conservation/SeminarPaper/PAPERRIYADH.html>

104 A. Ghafar Ahmad, "The Architectural Styles of Mosques in Malaysia: From Vernacular to Modern Structures," (paper presented at the Symposium on Mosque Architecture, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia 31 January-3 February 1999), <http://www.hbp.usm.my/conservation/SeminarPaper/PAPERRIYADH.html>

105 Asia Explorers, "Putra Mosque," n.d., http://www.asiaexplorers.com/malaysia/putra_mosque.htm

106 ISRA International, "Chinese Style Mosque Completed in Malaysia," n.d., <http://www.israinternational.com/latest-news/250-chinese-style-mosque-completed-in-malaysia.html>

107 Hanis Maketab, "Unique Chinese-style Mosque," *New Straits Times*, 27 May 2013, <http://www.nst.com.my/top-news/unique-chinese-style-mosque-1.287338>

108 Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "2: The Vocabulary of Islamic Religious Architecture," n.d., <http://web.mit.edu/4.614/www/handout02.html>

109 Virginia Polytechnic University, "The Mosque," n.d.,

46, <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-050599-103655/unrestricted/ch14.pdf>

110 Charles de Ledesma, Mark Lewis, and Pauline Savage, “Religion, Temples and Social Conventions,” in *Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei* (London: Rough Guides, 2003), 70, 72.

111 Rough Guides, “Malaysia: Culture and Etiquette,” 2014, <http://www.roughguides.com/destinations/asia/malaysia/culture-etiquette/>

112 Gregory Rodgers, “Mosque Etiquette: Do’s and Don’t When Visiting Mosques,” About.com, Southeast Asia Travel, n.d., <http://goseasia.about.com/od/travelplanning/a/mosque-dos-and-donts.htm>

113 Journey Malaysia, “Facts and Fiction—Etiquette Guidelines,” 2014, <http://www.journeymalaysia.com/etiquette.htm>

114 Rough Guides, “Malaysia: Culture and Etiquette,” 2014, <http://www.roughguides.com/destinations/asia/malaysia/culture-etiquette/>

115 Gregory Rodgers, “Mosque Etiquette: Do’s and Don’t When Visiting Mosques,” About.com, Southeast Asia Travel, n.d., <http://goseasia.about.com/od/travelplanning/a/mosque-dos-and-donts.htm>

116 Ash-Shawkani, “Preventing Others From Crossing During the Prayer,” Islaam.net, n.d., <http://www.islaam.net/main/display.php?id=54&category=111>

Overview: Chapter 2 Assessment

1. Most Muslims in Malaysia are Sunni.

TRUE

Most of the nation's Muslims are Sunni following the Shafi Madhab School. Shi'ites are a minority, consisting of approximately 200,000 people.

2. Few Muslims show a strong commitment to the five Pillars of Islam.

FALSE

Malaysia's Muslims show strong commitment to the five Pillars of Islam. Some 98% of Malaysia's Muslim population believes in one God, and that Muhammad is His prophet (shahada). Approximately 90% also say that religion is very important in their lives. Nearly 80% pray several times a day, although 43% do not attend mosque regularly

3. The government plays an active role in religious affairs in Malaysia.

TRUE

Federal and state officials oversee Islamic activities. This oversight includes the content of sermons and the use of mosques. Federal and state officials can place bans on some imams to keep them from speaking at public mosques. Imams are appointed by the state governments.

4. All Muslim women are required to wear the hijab (tudung) when in public.

FALSE

Women are now encouraged, but not required to wear the Islamic veil (hijab or tudung) in most Malaysian states. However, in Kelantan state women are now required to cover all but hands and faces.

5. Non-Muslims are allowed to visit mosques in Malaysia.

TRUE

Visitors are often welcome in Malaysian mosques but in some cases, non-Muslim females may be denied entrance to a mosque.



Malay performers
© Andy Enero

Chapter 3 Traditions

Introduction

The Malay people are believed to have migrated from Melanesia. The original Malays settled in the plains, which pushed the native population into the jungles.¹ Sometime in the 15th century, the people of the city of Malacca started referring to themselves as Malays (*Melayu*). Since then, Malay has been applied to anyone who practiced Islam and spoke the Malay language.² The identification of specific Malay traditions is complicated because there are different regions and customs (*adat*) across Malaysia.³

Modern Malay culture has been strongly influenced by the traditions of other cultures including Thailand, Java and Sumatra, as well as Hindu India.⁴ Historically, Malays lived in a feudal society with commoners clearly distinguished from nobility. That has changed in contemporary Malaysia, yet persistent class distinctions continue to characterize Malay life.^{5,6} Some Hindu traditions also still evident in the daily lives of



Friends

© ~bzz~/ flickr.com

Muslims whose families originally came from Hindu India, such as ritual celebrations and the belief in spirits.⁷

Honors and Values

Malaysia is a pluralistic society, yet its cultural foundations are clearly Malay. Thus, Malays believe that they hold a special place in society.⁸ Malay culture is strongly shaped by the dualistic notions of *budi-Islam*. This frames Malay identity and values. *Budi*, pre-dates Islam among the Malay

and refers to the internal values of maintaining peace and harmony in all things, and this defines many Malay values.⁹ It is this aspect of culture that has contributed to the Malays' reputation of being tolerant, cooperative, patient, and sensitive.¹⁰ Furthermore, the Islamic tradition of loyalty to the sultan reinforced the norm of never questioning elders. Such extreme deference to authority exists in most cultures in the region. However, Malays lack a warrior heritage, or even a golden age and this also impacts their cultural identity.¹²

Other core values have shaped the modern Malay view and personality. Friendships are more valuable than material wealth. Communication is often metaphorical rather than direct. Courtesy and grace are hallmarks of their social interactions.¹³ As a consequence, Malays have a strong sense of shame (*malu*) and a great desire to save face. They strictly avoid challenging, criticizing, or making fun of others in public.^{14,15} If an individual loses face and cannot find some way to restore it, the shame may become destructive and lead to negative behaviors, including suicide. The phrase, run amok, comes from the Malay word *amok*, which means frenzied behavior related to attempts to restore face.¹⁶



Children waving
© lets.book / flickr.com

Greetings and Titles

Greetings

Men often shake hands with each other, but may also bow or nod their head in greeting. The Malaysian handshake varies from that in the West. One person extends a hand and the other reaches out lightly clasping it with both his hands for 10-12 seconds after which he retracts one hand and places it over the chest. The ritual is then repeated by the other man.^{17, 18, 19, 20} Malay women greet each other with a handshake and a slight bow. Devout Muslims will not touch a

member of the opposite sex. Men should always wait to see if the woman extends her hand first and foreign women should do likewise when greeting a Malaysian man.^{21, 22} During conversations, members of the same sex may occasionally touch each other.²³

Exchange 6: Peace be upon you.

Soldier:	Peace be upon you.	aas saalaamoo aalaykoom.
Local:	And peace be upon you.	waa aalaykoom saalaam.

Malays use the standard Muslim greeting, meaning “Peace be upon you.” Alternatively, greetings may indicate the time of day: “Good Morning” (*Selamat pagi*), “Good Day” (*Selamat tengah hari*), “Good Afternoon” (*Selamat petang*), and “Good Evening” or “Good Night” (*Selamat malam*).²⁴

Exchange 7: How are you?

Soldier:	How are you?	aapa kaabaar?
Local:	Fine, thank you.	baayek, treema kaasey.

Malaysians generally establish direct eye-contact, taking care not to stare for too long. Prolonged eye-contact may be seen as aggressive or threatening. Women often establish more indirect eye-contact, particularly with men.²⁵



Elderly man
© Trey Ratcliff

Titles

Malays do not generally have surnames. Instead, they attach their father's name to their personal name. Therefore, when addressing a Malay it is proper to use their first names preceded by a title.^{26, 27} Thus, Amirul bin Suleiman would be addressed as Mr. Amirul. It is polite to use the person's name after a greeting. "Good Morning" would thus be conveyed "*Selamat pagi, Encik Amirul.*"²⁸ If the name of the person is not known, use Mister (*encik*) or Madam (*puan*) to convey respect.²⁹

If a person has a professional title, it should be used followed by the first name. Common titles

include *Dato*, *Datuk*, and *Tan Sri* all of which are roughly equivalent to the British title of sir.^{30, 31} Less formal titles are also common and include *Haji*, indicating that someone has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Younger children often refer to older men as *Bapa saudara* (Uncle) and to older women as *Emak Saudara* (Aunty).³²

Exchange 8: Hi, Mr. Hassan.

Soldier:	Hi, Mr. Hassan.	haay enchik haasaan
Local:	Hello!	halo!
Soldier:	Are you doing well?	aandaa seyhaat?
Local:	Yes.	Ya.

Malays often avoid the informal you (*anda*) when speaking with strangers and will instead ask, "What's the lady's name" rather than "What is your name?" when addressing a woman.³³ She would then answer, "The lady is named Latifah. What is the gentleman's name?" He would then respond, "The gentleman's name is Hassan."³⁴

Exchange 9: How is your family?

Soldier:	How is your family?	baagaaymaana kelooaarga aandaa?
Local:	They are doing fine, thank you.	mreyka semoowa nya baayek, treema kaasey.



Malay women
© Vin Crosbie

Gender Issues

Malay women have traditionally enjoyed relative gender equality with men.³⁵ Men and women are also generally free to occupy the same public spaces, although this is changing. In Kelantan and other conservative states there is an increase in gender segregation related to the rise of political Islam. This places form over substance and women are deeply affected.³⁶ In many conservative states, women and men must now sit in different sections at public gatherings, and some supermarket checkout lines are also gender specific.

Styling salons throughout the nation are segregated throughout the nation.^{37, 38, 39} Public displays of affection are also strictly forbidden and may be punished by up to a year in prison.⁴⁰ Men and women will also avoid touching each other in public, although shaking hands may be acceptable in certain circumstances.⁴¹ The healthcare system is also affected by this. In 2013, a request was made to prohibit male doctors from being assigned to obstetrics and gynecology departments.⁴² Currently, women and men may travel together in the same public transportation vehicles; however, in 2010 Malaysia implemented female-only bus service in an attempt to curtail sexual harassment.⁴³ Female-only cars are also available on commuter trains.⁴⁴ There is no gender segregation in the workplace, where men and women may work side-by-side.⁴⁵



Shoes left outside
© Jess Cheng

Hospitality and Gift Giving

Malays take hospitality very seriously and prefer to receive visitors by invitation. For example, it is customary to call out and announce one's presence rather than walking directly inside a home.^{46, 47} Once a visitor is invited in, shoes should be removed and feet should be washed before walking about the house. The family will have an earthenware jug of water for that purpose.⁴⁸ Accept a glass of tea or a plate of snacks if offered by your Malay host. It is offered in the spirit of friendship and it is rude to turn it down.⁴⁹

Exchange 10: I appreciate your hospitality.

Soldier:	I really appreciate your hospitality.	saaya saangat bertreema kaasey aataas laayaanaan baayek andaa.
Local:	It is nothing.	teedaak aada aapa-aapa.

It is considered polite to bring a gift, even though one is not expected. Good gift choices are food, beverages, pastries, small gifts for children, or a souvenir from one's home country.^{50, 51, 52} Gifts of food must always be in accordance with Islamic dietary laws (*halal*), so avoid giving gifts of alcohol, pork, or pigskin since these are not *halal*.^{53, 54} Use any color of wrapping paper to wrap your gift, but be careful using white or yellow. A gift wrapped in white paper is a symbol of death and mourning, while a gift wrapped in yellow paper is reserved for royalty.^{55, 56} Gifts are always given with the right hand and gifts are normally received with the right hand, but it is also appropriate to accept a gift using both hands.^{57, 58} As a rule, gifts are not opened in front of the giver.⁵⁹

Exchange 11: This gift is for you.

Soldier:	This gift is for you.	haadyaa inee oontuk andaa.
Local:	I cannot accept this.	saaya teedaak boley menremanya.

The host and his family have likely put substantial effort into planning the meal, so the guest should acknowledge their hard work. Rather than directly praising the hostess's cooking, which might embarrass her, the appropriate way to express appreciation is to emphasize that the ingredients must have been selected with great care and prepared with much attention. This will indirectly convey to the hostess that you found her cooking delicious.⁶⁰



Nasi lemak
© Yun Huang Yong

Eating Habits and Types of Food

Eating Customs

Malaysians typically eat three meals a day, but often snack throughout the day on food purchased at vendor stalls.^{61, 62} Breakfast is generally eaten between 6:30 and 10:00 a.m. and might consist of a bowl of noodles, or toast and eggs, or Indian bread that is heated on a griddle, or *nasi lemak*, the national dish of Malaysia made of rice cooked in coconut milk served on a banana leaf.^{63, 64,}⁶⁵ Lunch often begins around 12:30.⁶⁶ Dinner is the largest meal of the day and is generally eaten right after work.⁶⁷ Families prefer to dine together whenever possible.⁶⁸

Malays do not have a tradition of eating meals in courses. Instead, they prefer to serve all the food at once.⁶⁹ Food is generally eaten with the hands, so hands should be washed before the meal. Food is scooped horizontally, never vertically toward the mouth, using only the thumb and three fingers of the right hand,. Most tables will include a water jug (*ketor*) to clean one's fingers. Never, under any circumstances, use the left hand for eating.^{70, 71} If utensils are provided, hold the spoon in the right hand and the fork in the left. Push food onto the spoon with the fork. Never eat with the fork. When finished, place the utensils on the plate.⁷² It is considered polite to clean one's plate.⁷³



Masak Lemak
© Roseli A. Bakar

Types of Food

Malay cooking involves a lot of spices, including chili, turmeric, coriander, star anise, and cumin.⁷⁴ Food varies across the nation and each region has its own specialty.^{76, 77} Rice is a staple at nearly every meal.⁷⁸ Pork and pork derivative products are prohibited, however, as are all other foods containing pork or pork derivatives.

Common acceptable meats include chicken, beef, and mutton. Fish dishes are also common and generally feature shrimp or cuttlefish.⁷⁹ Malays generally use only halal meats. Non-pork meat is considered halal only when the animal is slaughtered following the standards of Islamic dietary law.^{80, 81} Pork cannot not be made halal.

Masak lemak is a rich creamy dish made with a coconut base that is flavored with turmeric and lemongrass. Chilies may be added to add heat.^{82, 83} *Masak pedas* are hot chili dishes, while *Ayam masak merah* (spicy tomato chicken) is flavored with dried red chilies, ginger, garlic, cloves, cardamom seeds, cinnamon, and star anise.^{84, 85} *Masak assam* are hot and sour dishes generally flavored with tamarind.^{86, 87} All include meat, poultry or seafood.⁸⁸

Exchange 12: What is the name of this dish?

Soldier:	What is the name of this dish?	aapa naama maasaakan inee?
Local:	This is <i>laksa johor</i> .	inee laaksa johor.

Laksa is a noodle soup found in many varieties. Some are served in a curry sauce, while others are served in a sour fish base.⁸⁹ *Laksa Johor* is distinguished by the use of spaghetti noodles, rather than traditional laksa noodles.⁹⁰

Exchange 13: This food is very good.

Soldier:	This food is very good.	Maakaanaan inee saangat sedaap.
Local:	It's <i>mee goreng</i> .	inee mee goring.

Exchange 14: Ingredients

Soldier:	What ingredients are used to make <i>mee goreng</i> ?	aapa baahaan baahaan yang dee goonakaan oontuk membwaat mee goreng?
Local:	Noodles, onion, tofu, chili, vegetables, tomatoes, and egg.	mee, baawaang, taahoo, laada, saayur-sayuraan, tomaato daan telo.

Malay deserts are typically made with coconut, coconut milk and palm sugar. Popular deserts include steamed coconut pudding (*kuih talam*), glutinous rice topped with caramelized coconut (*pulut inti*), black rice pudding (*pulut hitam*), and *aiskrim potong*, an ice-cream dish made from coconut milk flavored with red beans, rose syrup and local fruits.⁹¹



Men in baju melayu
© Ryan Albrely

Dress Codes

Urban residents typically wear Western-style clothing, while traditional clothing is more common in rural areas. Mixing traditional and Western-style clothing is also common. Clothing is typically conservative and both men and women cover their torsos. Short sleeves that come at least to the elbow are acceptable, however women should try to wear long-sleeved garments. Long pants are preferable, but shorts or skirts that come at least to the knee are fine.^{92, 93} When making official visits, it is important to appear in professional attire. Casual wear will be taken as a lack of respect.^{94, 95}

For men, the traditional outfit is the *baju melayu* and it is still worn on a regular basis. It consists of a loose long-sleeved shirt tunic (*baju*) with a raised collar worn over a pair of pants (*seluar*). It is adorned by a wrap-around skirt. This is often accompanied with a short sarong (*sampin*) wrapped around the hips.⁹⁶ The outfit is topped off with a velvet cap (*songkok*), especially on Friday, the Muslim day of prayer.⁹⁷ Men who have made the hajj wear a white skull cap (*songkok Haji*).⁹⁸

Women have several choices. One is the two-piece *sarung kebaya*, a tight long-sleeved blouse (*baju kebaya*) atop a body-hugging batik or silk skirt with a slit to allow for

movement.^{99, 100} Another popular traditional outfit is the *baju kurung*. This consists of a loose tunic (*baju*) worn over a long wrap around skirt (*sarong*).¹⁰¹ It can be made from many fabrics, but batik and silk are considered higher quality. The sarong can even be adorned with beadwork and embroidery. A white *baju kurung* suit is worn for funerals, while more somber colors are worn for occasions where it is important to show respect.^{102, 103} In the past, Malay women traditionally covered their heads with a loose fitting shawl (*selendang*) made of lace draped over the shoulders. However, a head scarf (*tudung*) is now the social norm for Malay females past puberty.^{104, 105, 106}



Yee Sang, raw fish salad
© Lynac / flickr.com

Non-religious Holidays

On New Year's Eve families hold a reunion dinner at their parents' home or at the home of the eldest son. *Yee Sang* is a raw fish salad and it is the first dish served. When it is served, everyone mixes and tosses the salad. The higher the salad is tossed, the greater the fortunes in the coming year. Gift-giving is an important part of this holiday and includes giving children red envelopes filled with money. Festivities officially last for 15 days.¹⁰⁷

On New Year's Day (1 January 2014) Malaysians celebrate the New Year in all states except Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis, and Terengganu.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁹ The Chinese New Year (31 January 2014) is second non-religious holiday celebrated across Malaysia.^{110, 111} Federal Territory Day (3 February 2014) follows and is celebrated in Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, and Labuan. It commemorates the formation of the federal territory of Kuala Lumpur in 1974.¹¹² Labor Day (1 May 2014) is celebrated across the nation. For most Malaysians it is a day to visit family and travel, although there may be occasional rallies by workers fighting to improve their working conditions.^{113, 114}

The Birthday of Yang di-Pertuan (7 June 2014) always falls on the first Saturday in June.^{115, 116} The name of this holiday, *Yang di-Pertuan*, means "king" in Malaysian. This is an important national holiday and includes a huge celebration in Merdeka Square in Kuala Lumpur. These celebrations are accompanied by Trooping the Colors, in which the king arrives in full dress uniform to inspect the troops. Additionally, the king will award medals and other honors to prominent Malaysians. Cultural exhibitions are held throughout the rest of the country.¹¹⁷

National Day (*Hari Merdeka*) is celebrated on 31 August. It marks the day that the

Federation of Malaya gained its independence from the British. Across the nation seven shouts of “*Merdeka!*” ring forth. Malaysians proudly display their patriotism and the national flag is visible everywhere.¹¹⁸ Following this is Malaysia Day (16 September 2014) celebrating the inclusion of Sabah and Sarawak in the Federation and marking the country’s name change to Malaysia.¹¹⁹ There are a number of state specific holidays scattered throughout the year marking the birthdays of the state Sultans.¹²⁰



Shoes left outside
© Weixiang Ng

Do's and Don'ts

Do smile when you greet someone.

Do bow slightly when leaving, entering or passing by people to signify “excuse me.”

Do call ahead before visiting a Malay home.

Do remove your shoes before entering a Malay home or mosque.

Do wait for a Malay woman to extend her hand for a handshake, since Malays traditionally refrain from touching the opposite sex when greeting.

Do accept drinks and snacks offered by a Malay host in the spirit of friendship.

Do address Malays by their first names preceded by title or Mister (*Encik*) or Madame (*Puan*) or other title.

Do use the right thumb with fingers folded under when pointing at something.

Don't use the left hand to pass anything—it is associated with bathroom activities.

Don't point your feet toward another person or toward sacred objects.

Don't stand with your hands in your pockets as this is a sign of anger.

Don't touch anyone's head.

Don't engage in public displays of affection.

Don't take photographs without asking permission first.

Don't discuss Malaysian politics or ethnic group relations.

Endnotes

- 1 John Nagl, "Chapter 4: British Army Counterinsurgency Learning During the Malayan Emergency, 1948–1951," in *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 60.
- 2 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Malaysia: The Advent of Islam," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/52555/The-advent-of-Islam>
- 3 Hussin Mutalib, "Chapter 2: Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia," in *Islam in Malaysia: From Revivalism to Islamic State?* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1993), 18.
- 4 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Malay," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359662/Malay>
- 5 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Malay," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359662/Malay>
- 6 K. Romano-Young, "Peoples of Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and the Philippines," in *World and Its Peoples: Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Brunei* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 1192.
- 7 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Malay," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359662/Malay>
- 8 Wan Norhasniah Wan Husin, "Budi-Islam: It's Role in the Construction of Malay Identity in Malaysia," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 1, no. 12 (September 2011): 132-133, http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_1_No_12_September_2011/19.pdf
- 9 Wan Norhasniah Wan Husin, "Budi-Islam: It's Role in the Construction of Malay Identity in Malaysia," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 1, no. 12 (September 2011): 132-133, http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_1_No_12_September_2011/19.pdf
- 10 Wan Norhasniah Wan Husin, "Cultural Clash between the Malays and Chinese in Malaysia: An Analysis on the Formation and Implementation of National Cultural Policy," *International Proceedings of Economics Development and Research* 34 (2012): 2-3, <http://www.ipedr.com/vol34/001-ICHHS2012-H00001.pdf>
- 11 Wan Norhasniah Wan Husin, "Budi-Islam: It's Role in the Construction of Malay Identity in Malaysia," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 1, no. 12 (September 2011): 132-133, http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_1_No_12_September_2011/19.pdf
- 12 David Martin Jones, "Malaysia's Dilemma," Nautilus Institute, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 21 February 2008, <http://nautilus.org/apsnet/malaysias-dilemma/#axzz2q17WDuOf>
- 13 Wan Norhasniah Wan Husin, "Budi-Islam: It's Role in the Construction of Malay Identity in Malaysia," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 1, no. 12 (September 2011): 136-137, http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_1_No_12_September_2011/19.pdf
- 14 Cliff Goddard, "Chapter 3: Words: Origins, Structures, Meanings," in *The Languages of East and Southeast Asia: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 80.
- 15 Heidi Munan, "Chapter 4: Ways of Seeing—You and They," in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 92-93.
- 16 Heidi Munan, "Chapter 4: Ways of Seeing—You and They," in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 92-93.
- 17 "Malaysia: Greetings," Culture Grams Online, ProQuest, 2014.
- 18 Kwintessential, "Malaysia-Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," n.d., <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/malaysia.html>
- 19 THA Holiday, "Doing Things the Malaysian Way: Malaysia's Customs and Etiquette," 2014, <http://thaholiday.com/malaysias-customs-and-etiquette/>
- 20 Global Connections, "Resources: The Handshake," 2010, http://www.globalconnectionstraining.ca/resources_notes.html
- 21 Culture Crossing, "Malaysia: Greetings," n.d., http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=7&CID=125
- 22 Kwintessential, "Malaysia-Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," n.d., <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/>

global-etiquette/malaysia.html

23 Culture Crossing, “Malaysia: Personal Space and Touching,” n.d., http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=9&CID=125

24 Thomas G. Oey and Alwee Alkadri, “Greetings,” in *Everyday Malay: Phrasebook and Dictionary* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2004), 14-15.

25 Culture Crossing, “Malaysia: Eye Contact,” n.d., http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=10&CID=125

26 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, “FAQS,” 2014, http://www.kln.gov.my/web/nzl_wellington/faqs

27 Executive Planet, “Malaysia: First Name or Title?” 6 May 2008, http://www.executiveplanet.com/index.php?title=Malaysia:_First_Name_or_Title%3F

28 Executive Planet, “Malaysia: First Name or Title?” 6 May 2008, http://www.executiveplanet.com/index.php?title=Malaysia:_First_Name_or_Title%3F

29 Executive Planet, “Malaysia: First Name or Title?” 6 May 2008, http://www.executiveplanet.com/index.php?title=Malaysia:_First_Name_or_Title%3F

30 Culture Crossing, “Malaysia: Titles and Business Cards,” n.d., http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=20&CID=125

31 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, “FAQS,” 2014, http://www.kln.gov.my/web/nzl_wellington/faqs

32 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, “FAQS,” 2014, http://www.kln.gov.my/web/nzl_wellington/faqs

33 Thomas G. Oey and Alwee Alkadri, “Greetings,” in *Everyday Malay: Phrasebook and Dictionary* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2004), 14–15, 17.

34 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 8: The Malaysian Languages,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 203–205.

35 Rose Ismail, “Women and Islam in Malaysia,” Newsbreak, March 2004, http://kyotoreview.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/issue/issue4/article_348.html

36 Rose Ismail, “Women and Islam in Malaysia,” Newsbreak, March 2004, http://kyotoreview.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/issue/issue4/article_348.html

37 Norani Othman, “Muslim Women and the Challenge of Islamic Fundamentalism/Extremism: An Overview of Southeast Asian Muslim Women’s Struggle for Human Rights and Gender Equality,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 29 (2006): 341-342, <http://www.arrow.org.my/SRHRIR/MuslimWomenChallengeofIslamicFundamentalism2006.pdf>

38 Raina Ng, “Closing the Gender Gap,” *The Edge*, 4 November 2011, <http://www.theedgemaalaysia.com/management/195658-closing-the-gender-gap.html>

39 Press Trust of India, “Malaysia Enforces Gender-Segregation Rule for Salons,” *Business Standard*, 26 November 2012, http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/malaysia-enforces-gender-segregation-rule-for-salons-112112600326_1.html

40 Afreen Ahamed, “Countries Where Public Displays of Affection are Crimes,” *World Issues* 360, 9 February 2013, <http://www.worldissues360.com/index.php/countries-where-public-displays-of-affection-are-crimes-1147/>

41 Maggie Y., *Business and Social Etiquette 101: A Look at the Malaysian Culture*, Yahoo, 13 March 2007, <http://voices.yahoo.com/business-social-etiquette-101-look-malaysian-245584.html>

42 Aziza Aini, “Female Doctor or Male Doctor?” *The Malaysian Insider*, 5 January 2014, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/sideviews/article/female-doctor-or-male-doctor-aziza-aini>

43 William Lee Adams, “Malaysia Starts Women-Only Bus Service to Fight Sexual Harassment,” *Time NewsFeed*, 2 December 2010, <http://newsfeed.time.com/2010/12/02/malaysia-starts-women-only-bus-service-to-fight-sexual-harassment/>

44 KTMKomuter, “FAQs: Ladies Coach,” 2010, <http://www.ktmkomuter.com.my/faqs/faq.php>

45 Anas A. Akel, et al., “Doing Business in the Muslim World-Practical Issues for Employers and Employees,” *Bloomberg Law Reports* 4, no. 4, <http://luqmanlegal.com/web/images/stories/doing%20business%20.pdf>

- 46 Nazlina Hussin, "Malay Table Manners," Pickles and Spices, 2013, <http://www.pickles-and-spices.com/malay-table-manners.html>
- 47 Heidi Munan, "Chapter 3: Ways of Seeing—They and You," in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 26.
- 48 Nazlina Hussin, "Malay Table Manners," Pickles and Spices, 2013, <http://www.pickles-and-spices.com/malay-table-manners.html>
- 49 Tripod, "Customary Code of Conduct (Adat Resam)," n.d., http://members.tripod.com/kidd_cruz/adat_resam.htm
- 50 SH Global Education, "The Malaysian Dining Etiquette Advantage in International Business," 26 November 2011, <http://shgloaleducation.com/?p=274>
- 51 Kwintessential, "Malaysia- Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," 2014, <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/malaysia.html>
- 52 "Malaysia: Visiting," Culture Grams Online, ProQuest, 2014.
- 53 SH Global Education, "The Malaysian Dining Etiquette Advantage in International Business," 26 November 2011, <http://shgloaleducation.com/?p=274>
- 54 Kwintessential, "Malaysia," 2014, <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/malaysia.html>
- 55 Kwintessential, "Malaysia-Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," 2014, <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/malaysia.html>
- 56 Executive Planet, "Malaysia: First Name or Title?" 6 May 2008, http://www.executiveplanet.com/index.php?title=Malaysia:_First_Name_or_Title%3F
- 57 SH Global Education, "The Malaysian Dining Etiquette Advantage in International Business," 26 November 2011, <http://shgloaleducation.com/?p=274>
- 58 Kwintessential, "Malaysia-Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," 2014, <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/malaysia.html>
- 59 Kwintessential, "Malaysia-Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," 2014, <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/malaysia.html>
- 60 Seong Teo Kok, "The Acquisition of Malay as a Second Language: A Case of the Essentiality of Culture Learning," (paper, SEALANG project, 2001), 7, <http://sealang.net/sala/archives/pdf8/teo2001acquisition.pdf>
- 61 "Malaysia: Eating," Culture Grams Online, ProQuest, 2014.
- 62 Heidi Munan, "Chapter 6: Land of a Thousand Tastes," in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 150.
- 63 Bee, "Nasi Lemak Recipe (Malaysian Coconut Milk Rice with Anchovies Sambal)," Rasa Malaysia, 9 January 2007, <http://rasamalaysia.com/recipe-nasi-lemak-coconut-milk-rice/>
- 64 Simon Richmond, et al., "When to Eat," in *Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei*, 12th ed. (China: Lonely Planet, 2013), 41. http://www.amazon.com/Lonely-Planet-Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei/dp/1741798477#reader_1741798477
- 65 M.R. Danial, "Malaysian Breakfast Choices! Its [sic] Fat but yet Delicious!" *Microscopasia Journal*, 22 March 2013, <http://microscopasia.blogspot.com/2013/03/malaysian-breakfast-choices-its-fat-but.html>
- 66 Simon Richmond, et al., "When to Eat," in *Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei*, 12th ed. (China: Lonely Planet, 2013), 41. http://www.amazon.com/Lonely-Planet-Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei/dp/1741798477#reader_1741798477
- 67 James Alexander, "Chapter 5: Food and Drink," in *Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore* (Guilford, CT: The Globe Pequot Press, 2006), 63-64.
- 68 "Malaysia: Eating," Culture Grams Online, ProQuest, 2014.
- 69 SH Global Education, "The Malaysian Dining Etiquette Advantage in International Business," 26 November 2011, <http://shgloaleducation.com/?p=274>
- 70 SH Global Education, "The Malaysian Dining Etiquette Advantage in International Business," 26 November 2011, <http://shgloaleducation.com/?p=274>
- 71 Heidi Munan, "Chapter 6: Land of a Thousand Tastes,"

- in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 166.
- 72 eDiplomat, “Malaysia,” 2014, http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_my.htm
- 73 SH Global Education, “The Malaysian Dining Etiquette Advantage in International Business,” 26 November 2011, <http://shgloaleducation.com/?p=274>
- 74 Abby Lu, “Tracking Down Fine Malay Food,” The Star Online 17 October 2010, <http://www.thestar.com.my/story.aspx?file=%2f2010%2f10%2f17%2fsundaymetro%2f7229926&sec=sundaymetro>
- 75 Whole Travel, “Eating Out in Malaysia,” 2002, http://whotravel.com/asia_travel/malaysia/eating_out.htm
- 76 Melayu Online, “Malay Cuisine,” 2007, <http://melayuonline.com/eng/culture/dig/631/malay-cuisine>
- 77 SH Global Education, “The Malaysian Dining Etiquette Advantage in International Business,” 26 November 2011, <http://shgloaleducation.com/?p=274>
- 78 K. Romano-Young, “Malaysia: Food and Drink,” in *World and Its Peoples: Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Brunei* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 1222. 79 K. Romano-Young, “Malaysia: Food and Drink,” in *World and Its Peoples: Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Brunei* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 1222.
- 80 Malaysiahalalfoods, “The Islamic Way of Slaughtering Animals,” 2005, <http://www.malaysiahalalfoods.com/slaughter.html>
- 81 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 6: Land of a Thousand Tastes,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 157-158.
- 82 Angloinfo, “Malay Food,” 2014, <http://malaysia.angloinfo.com/lifestyle/food-and-drink/malay-food/>
- 83 My Asian Kitchen, “Ayam Masak Lemak (Chicken Curry in Creamy Coconut),” 27 March 2010, <http://www.myasiankitchenny.com/2010/03/ayam-masak-lemakchicken-in-creamy.html>
- 84 Angloinfo, “Malay Food,” 2014, <http://malaysia.angloinfo.com/lifestyle/food-and-drink/malay-food/>
- 85 Phoenixfyre, “Malay Spicy Tomato Chicken (Ayam Masak Merah),” allrecipes.com, n.d., <http://allrecipes.com/recipe/8097/malay-spicy-tomato-chicken--ayam-masak-merah-.aspx>
- 86 Angloinfo, “Malay Food,” 2014, <http://malaysia.angloinfo.com/lifestyle/food-and-drink/malay-food/>
- 87 Cooknbakejournal, “Asam Pedas Ikan Pari (Sting Ray in Spicy and Sour Gravy),” The Malay Kitchen, 27 July 2013, <http://themalaykitchen.com/2013/07/27/asam-pedas-ikan-pari-sting-ray-in-spicy-and-sour-gravy/#more-871>
- 88 Angloinfo, “Malay Food,” 2014, <http://malaysia.angloinfo.com/lifestyle/food-and-drink/malay-food/>
- 89 Soupsong, “Laksa!” n.d., <http://www.soupsong.com/rlaksa.html>
- 90 Suhara, “Laksa Johor,” allrecipes.com, n.d., <http://allrecipes.com/recipe/1825/laksa-johor.aspx>
- 91 Angloinfo, “Malay Food,” 2014, <http://malaysia.angloinfo.com/lifestyle/food-and-drink/malay-food/>
- 92 “Malaysia: Personal Appearance,” Culture Grams Online, ProQuest, 2014.
- 93 Rough Guides, “Malaysia: Culture and Etiquette,” 2014, <http://www.roughguides.com/destinations/asia/malaysia/culture-etiquette/>
- 94 Kiat, “Malaysia Page – Travel Information,” n.d., <http://kiat.net/malaysia/travelinfo.html>
- 95 World Business Culture, “Malaysian Dress Code,” n.d., <http://www.worldbusinessculture.com/Malaysian-Business-Dress-Style.html>
- 96 Department of Tourism, Government of Malaysia, “Traditional Attire,” n.d., <http://www.tourism.gov.my/en/Master/Web-Page/About-Malaysia/Culture-n-Heritage/Traditional-Attire>
- 97 “Malaysia: Personal Appearance,” Culture Grams Online, ProQuest, 2014.
- 98 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 3: Ways of Seeing—They and

- You,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 43.
- 99 Freya, “Kebaya, Indonesian National Blouse for Woman,” HubPages, n.d., <http://freyclesare.hubpages.com/hub/KEBAYA-INDONESIAN-NATIONAL-APPAREL>
- 100 Peranakan Resource Library, “Peranakan Material Culture,” n.d., <http://peranakan.hostoi.com/page3.htm>
- 101 Department of Tourism, Government of Malaysia, “Traditional Attire,” n.d., <http://www.tourism.gov.my/en/Master/Web-Page/About-Malaysia/Culture-n-Heritage/Traditional-Attire>
- 102 Tripod, “Customary Code of Conduct (Adat Resam),” n.d., http://members.tripod.com/kidd_cruz/adat_resam.htm
- 103 Jerry Lin, “Traditional Clothing Worn by Malaysian Women,” Lifepath360, 19 August 2012, <http://www.lifepaths360.com/index.php/traditional-clothing-worn-by-malaysian-women-1367/>
- 104 Sylvia H. Chant and Cathy McIlwaine, “Chapter 4: Malaysia,” in *Three Generations, Two Genders, One World: Women and Men in a Changing Century* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 84. <http://books.google.com/books?id=dFC78hYzkIcC&pg=PA84&dq=malaysia+selendang&lr=#v=onepage&q=malaysia%20selendang&f=false>
- 105 Zaki Ragman, “Chapter 7: Home and Attire,” in *Gateway to Malay Culture* (2003. Singapore: Asiapac Books, 2003), 88. <http://books.google.com/books?id=1qIhB0I3Pq0C&pg=PA88&dq=tudung+selendang&lr=&cd=25#v=onepage&q=tudung%20selendang&f=false>
- 106 Department of Tourism, Government of Malaysia, “Traditional Attire,” n.d., <http://www.tourism.gov.my/en/Master/Web-Page/About-Malaysia/Culture-n-Heritage/Traditional-Attire>
- 107 Public Holidays Malaysia, “Chinese New Year 2014,” 2014, <http://publicholidays.com.my/chinese-new-year/>
- 108 Public Holidays, “Full List of 2014 Holidays Public Holidays,” 2014, <http://publicholidays.com.my/#2014>
- 109 Time and Date, “Holidays in Malaysia in 2014,” <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/malaysia/>
- 110 Public Holidays, “Full List of 2014 Holidays Public Holidays,” 2014, <http://publicholidays.com.my/#2014>
- 111 Time and Date, “Holidays in Malaysia in 2014,” <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/malaysia/>
- 112 Public Holidays Malaysia, “Federal Territory Day 2014,” 2014, <http://publicholidays.com.my/federal-territory-day/>
- 113 Public Holidays Malaysia, “Labour Day 2014,” 2014, <http://publicholidays.com.my/labour-day/>
- 114 Time and Date, “Holidays in Malaysia in 2014,” <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/malaysia/>
- 115 Time and Date, “Holidays in Malaysia in 2014,” <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/malaysia/>
- 116 Tha Holiday, “In Honor of the King: Yang Di-Pertuan Agong’s Birthday 2013,” n.d., <http://thaholiday.com/in-honor-of-the-king-yang-di-pertuan-agongs-birthday-2013/>
- 117 Tha Holiday, “In Honor of the King: Yang Di-Pertuan Agong’s Birthday 2013,” n.d., <http://thaholiday.com/in-honor-of-the-king-yang-di-pertuan-agongs-birthday-2013/>
- 118 Public Holidays Malaysia, “National Day/ Merdeka Day 2014,” 2014, <http://publicholidays.com.my/national-day/>
- 119 Yeng Ai Chun, “Malaysia Day Now a Public Holiday, Says PM,” The Star Online, 19 October 2009, <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/10/19/nation/20091019103509&sec=nation>
- 120 Public Holidays Malaysia, “Full List of 2014 Public Holidays,” 2014, <http://publicholidays.com.my/#2014>

Overview: Chapter 3 Assessment

1. The Malays have a reputation as a tolerant and patient people.

TRUE

The Malays' enjoy a reputation of being tolerant, cooperative, patient, and sensitive.

2. The handshake in Malaysia is often shorter than in Western cultures.

FALSE

The form of the Malaysian handshake varies from that in the West. One person extends a hand and the other reaches out and lightly clasps it with both hands for 10-12 seconds and then retracts one hand and placing it over the chest.

3. Gifts to Malays should not be wrapped in white or yellow paper.

TRUE

A gift wrapped in white paper is a symbol of death and mourning, while a gift wrapped in yellow paper is reserved for royalty

4. Traditional clothing is rarely worn outside of special holidays and celebrations.

FALSE

Urban residents typically wear Western-style clothing, while traditional clothing is more common in rural areas. Mixing traditional and Western-style clothing is common.

5. Malays are sensitive to the need to preserve face as a matter of honor.

TRUE

As a consequence, Malays have a strong sense of shame (malu) and a great desire to save face. They strictly avoid challenging, criticizing, or making fun of others in public.



Pulau Pinang
© Ian Fuller

Chapter 4: Urban Life

Introduction

Malaysia gained its independence in 1963. Since then, it has transformed into a predominantly urban nation with nearly 73% of the total population living in urban centers.^{1,2,3} The three most highly urbanized states are Kuala Lumpur, Pulau Pinang, and Selangor.⁴ The state of Selangor is where the capital city of Kuala Lumpur is located. The country's three largest urban regions include the Klang valley stretching 50 km (31 mi) east from Kuala Lumpur to Port Klang; the region from Penang Island across to Kulim in Kedah state; and the Johor Bahru-Pasir Gudang area.⁵

Urban centers have proliferated in Malaysia due to its export economy. The first Malaysian cities developed under British colonial rule as exporters of tin, rubber, timber and other raw materials.⁶ However, local consumption did not spur development until after Malaysian independence in 1957. Several decades of economic growth have

resulted in modern cities composed of an eclectic mix of futuristic high-rise buildings next to bustling traditional open air markets. In Kuala Lumpur, “Old cafes are tucked under gleaming expressways. Calls to prayer beckon white-collar professionals from towers of steel and glass.”^{7, 8}

Cities on the western side of the peninsula have expanded to accommodate rural migrants. Consequently, former rubber plantations have been annexed for residential housing developments. The Tamil Indians provided plantation labor, yet they have been regularly forced to live in squatter settlements.⁹

Urbanization has been relatively rapid, particularly in the largest cities and this has created various challenges. These include infrastructural issues, affordable housing, and political issues, as well as increased socioeconomic issues related to changes in the composition of urban populations. Urban populations that were once largely ethnic Chinese are now predominantly ethnic Malay.^{10, 11}



Pollution on the beach
© epSos.de / flickr.com

Urbanization Issues

Pollution is a major issue affecting urban Malaysia. Cities face challenges related to air, water, and noise pollution.¹²

Recent reports show unhealthy air quality levels in many urban areas. Much of this pollution derives from industrial waste and vehicle emissions.^{13, 14, 15}

Solid waste management is another critical issue. Cities are running out of space for landfills at a time when solid waste from growing urban populations is increasing.^{16, 17} Water supplies in nine major river basins have also been degraded by pollution from domestic and industrial waste,

and overextended drainage systems have contributed to the rising level of urban flooding.^{18, 19, 20}

Traffic congestion is another major problem. Poor engineering, planning, and increasing population levels have contributed to major congestion. For example, it can take an hour to travel 1.5 km (1 mi) in large cities like Kuala Lumpur.²¹ Even though high taxes make the price for cars among the world’s highest, Malaysian’s continue to purchase cars. It has one of the highest rates of car ownership.

Buses that speed through the city streets are one of the biggest contributors to traffic accidents.²² Street flooding is another significant cause of accidents and congestion.²³ Flooding is caused by poor drainage systems.

In 2004 urban poverty was lower than in rural areas, yet it still stood at just over 9%.²⁴ Poverty levels were highest among the ethnic Malay (4.1%) compared to ethnic Chinese (0.4%) and Indians (2.4%).²⁵ This is compounded by a lack of affordable housing within the metropolitan regions, which has led to the rise of slums on city fringes.^{26, 27} Housing in these settlements lack basic infrastructure.

Low rates of education are prevalent in urban areas; while crime, delinquency, and drug use is high.²⁸ All of these factors have led to a decline in the overall quality of urban life.²⁹



Hospital Tanah Rata
© Hunumann / flickr.com

Healthcare

Malaysia's comprehensive healthcare system is on par with Western nations, especially in the larger cities.^{30, 31} However, public ambulance services are not as reliable, and many attendants lack adequate training. Private ambulance services are generally better.³²

Health care is managed by the Ministry of Health. The public health system provides around 82% of the inpatient services, 35% of ambulatory care, and is available to the entire population. The much smaller private sector provides the rest and is mostly available in urban centers.³³

Exchange 15: Is the doctor in?

Soldier:	Is Dr. Hussein in?	dokter hooseyn aada?
Local:	No.	teedaak aada.

Most public doctors are employed in hospitals which has helped create a shortage of family health physicians in public practice.

Exchange 16: Is there a hospital nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a hospital nearby?	dekaat sinee aada hospetaal?
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	ya dee poosaat baandaa.

Primary health care is generally delivered by community clinics staffed by nurses. Care is often confined to curative or maternity and childcare services.^{34, 35} Many Malays first seek treatment from traditional healers. In urban settings, private physicians refer patients to hospitals.³⁶ More specialized care is handled through the hospital network, both public and private.³⁷

Emergency care is often handled by health clinics staffed with paramedics. Nearly all clinics are equipped with ambulances to transfer patients to hospitals if required.³⁸

Exchange 17: Do you know what is wrong?

Soldier:	Do you know what is wrong?	aandaa taaw aapa seelaapnya?
Local:	No.	teedaak.

Most pharmacies are found in urban centers. There are restrictions on the types and amounts of drugs that doctors in public health facilities can dispense, although no such restrictions exist for private doctors. Often, drugs dispensed in public health facilities are generic. There has been some problem with counterfeit drugs, although most drugs are safe.³⁹

In recent years, Malaysia has become a destination for medical tourists seeking quality, relatively inexpensive care.⁴⁰ In 2012, more than 670,000 people travelled to Malaysia for treatment and the industry is expected to show continued growth.^{41, 42}



*Primary school classroom
© Mahani Mohamad*

Education

Students in Malaysia attend 190 days of school each year, beginning in January and concluding in November.⁴³ Primary education (grades 1-6) is compulsory and free.^{44, 45} During primary school, all Malay students are required to take three hours of Islamic religious studies.⁴⁶ After completing primary school, students take an assessment test. If students pass, they are granted a certificate of completion and are allowed to continue on to lower secondary school.^{47, 48} Secondary school is free but not compulsory and is divided into two cycles. Lower secondary school lasts for three years for Malays (four for Chinese and Indian

students). Students who pass the test at the end of this cycle may go on to two years of upper secondary school. Students wishing to pursue post-secondary education must pass the upper-secondary examination, attend and pass an additional year of preparatory school, and pass university entrance exams.^{49, 50} Higher education includes both public and private institutions.^{51, 52}

Exchange 18: Do your children go to school?

Soldier:	Do your children go to school?	aanaak-aanaak aandaa purgee ke skolaah?
Local:	Yes.	ya.

Primary school attendance is nearly universal and approximately 98% of children who enter primary school complete all six years.⁵³ Malays in lower secondary school are required to complete two hours and 40 minutes of religious instruction.⁵⁴ In public secondary schools, attendance drops off. In 2003, 84.4% students were enrolled in lower secondary schools and, in 2011, 82% were enrolled in upper secondary schools.^{55, 56} At all levels, female education exceeds or is equal to that of boys. In higher education, the gender gap is significant, where 75% of university students are women.^{57, 58}

Students may opt to attend religious rather than public schools. The government provides funds for the Islamic schools that agree to government oversight. In these schools, the government-approved curriculum must be offered alongside other curriculum required by the school.⁵⁹ Approximately 30% of Malaysian students currently study in one of the more than 2,000 religious schools.⁶⁰ Islamic schools tend to reinforce the values of Malay families. This has partially resulted in lower absenteeism and drop-out rates in these types of schools.⁶¹



Typical restaurant stall
© Edmund Yeo

Restaurants

Food stalls are virtually everywhere.⁶² Malay food vendors sell only “halal” food, while the Chinese food vendors sell everything, including pork. It’s best to avoid wandering around the Malay section of food courts with pork dishes purchased from Chinese vendors.⁶³ Also popular are buffet-style restaurants (*Nasi Campur*). *Nasi Campur* will typically offer up to 100 different dishes (*lauk*).⁶⁴

Exchange 19: One bill

Soldier:	Put this all in one bill?	tolong letaakkan semoowa inee daalaam saatoo beel?
Local:	Okay.	baayiklaa.

Exchange 20: Coffee or tea

Soldier:	I would like coffee or tea.	saaya eengeen kopey aataw teh
Local:	Sure.	baayiklaa.

Common foods include *roti canai*. This is a type of flatbread made from wheat flour and eggs. It is stuffed with a variety of foods, including fried eggs, curried meats, and melted bananas.⁶⁵

Exchange 21: Are you still serving breakfast?

Soldier:	Are you still serving breakfast?	aandaa maasey heedaangkaan saaraapaan paagee?
Local:	Yes.	ya.

There are also endless varieties of hot, spicy noodle soups (*laksa*).⁶⁶ Grilled meat served on a skewer accompanied with spicy peanut sauce (*satay*) is another Malay specialty.⁶⁷

Exchange 21: Hot soup

Soldier:	I'd like some hot soup.	saaya eengeen soop paanaas.
Local:	Sure.	baayiklaah.

Exchange 23: Type of meat

Soldier:	What type of meat is this?	inee daageeng aapa?
Local:	Chicken.	bayaam.

Favorite deserts include *cendol*, made from coconut, sugar, and noodles; *Ais kacang*, made from red beans and jellied fruit topped with shaved ice, various syrups, and condensed milk; and *bubur kacang*, made from mung beans and rice cooked in coconut milk.⁶⁸

Exchange 24: Dessert

Soldier:	Do you have a dessert?	aandaa aada penchoochee mooloot?
Local:	Yes, we have bubur kacang	ya aada. kaamee aada booboor kaachaang.

Exchange 25: May I have a glass of water?

Soldier:	May I have a glass of water?	boley beree saaya segelaas aayir?
Local:	Yes, right away.	boley, skaaraang jooga saaya aambeyl.

Hosts are expected to order all dishes when dining in a restaurant.⁶⁹ Some hotel restaurants might add a gratuity, yet the custom of tipping is unfamiliar to Malays.^{70, 71}

Exchange 26: Can I have my total bill, please?

Soldier:	Can I have my total bill, please?	boley saaya daapaatkaan beel?
Local:	Yes, of course.	ya tentoo saaja.

Shopping

Markets and Vendors

Traditional markets operate year round, with the Petaling Street Market in Kuala Lumpur as one of the most popular.⁷² However, locals do much of their shopping at night markets (*pasar malam*). Pasar malam are only open on specific evenings and are generally open from 6:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.^{73,74}

Exchange 27: Is the market nearby?

Soldier:	Is the market nearby?	aada kaah paasaa dekaat sinee?
Local:	Yes, over there on the right.	ya, dee saanaa ke seblaah kaanaan.

Exchange 28: Night market

Soldier:	When will the night market be here?	beela paasaa maalaam aakaan aada dee sinee?
Local:	On Tuesday.	haaree slaasa.

The number of western-style shopping malls has increased in urban areas.⁷⁵ The most popular is the Egyptian-inspired Sunway Pyramid mega-mall in Petaling Jaya. It contains both an ice rink and bowling lanes.^{76,77}

Exchange 29: Do you sell batik?

Soldier:	Do you sell batik?	aandaa aada menjwaal baateyk?
Local:	Yes.	ya aada.

Exchange 30: Do you have any more of these?

Soldier:	Do you have any more of these?	aanda aada laagee sepurtee inee?
Local:	No.	teedaak aada.

Hand-painted and dyed fabric known as *Batik*, as well as pewterware and wood carvings are popular purchases.⁷⁸

Exchange 31: May I examine this close up?

Soldier:	May I examine this close up?	boley saaya preeksa inee denga lebeyh dekaat laagee?
Local:	Sure.	tentoo saaja.

Bargaining is expected and includes several steps. First, do not appear enthusiastic about an item you wish to purchase. Let the merchant set the opening price. Always respond simply with “cheaper!” Keep repeating that phrase, rather than quoting a price, until you are ready to make your final offer. Make sure your price is lower than what you are actually willing to pay so that the owner can save face by making you a slightly higher offer to which you can agree. If you agree, you are obligated to buy the item. Not doing so is the height of rudeness. Always be polite and smile when bargaining. If you cannot get to a price you are willing to pay, it is acceptable to walk away. However, before doing

so, thank the owner.⁷⁹

Money, Credit Cards, and ATMs

The official unit of currency is the Malaysian ringgit (RM) and in January 2014, USD 1 equaled 3.28 ringgit.^{80, 81} Currency is easily exchanged in larger cities, at banks, hotels, or with licensed moneychangers who often give the best rates. Avoid using unlicensed money changers.⁸²

Exchange 32: Can I buy a batik dress with this much money?

Soldier:	Can I buy a batik dress with this much money?	boley saaya belee baajoo baateyk dengaang waang sebaanyaak inee?
Local:	No.	teedaak boley.

Many merchants keep little cash on hand. They will also likely only accept local currency because of concerns over counterfeit U.S. banknotes.⁸³

Exchange 33: Can you give me change for this?

Soldier:	Can you give me change for this?	boley anda buree saaya tookaraan oontuk inee?
Local:	No.	teedaak boley.

Exchange 34: Do you accept U.S. currency?

Soldier:	Do you accept U.S. currency?	aanda treema dolur amereeka?
Local:	No we only accept ringgits.	teedaak, kaamee haanya treema reenggat maleyshyaa.



ATM machines are widely available in most cities, but may be more difficult to find in rural areas or smaller towns.⁸⁴ Many ATM machines require a 6 digit pin number, so cards from the United States may not work.⁸⁵ Banks are open Monday through Friday, except in the Muslim states of Kedah, Terengganu, and Kelantan. In these three states, banks close every Friday and open for a couple of hours on Saturday morning.⁸⁶ Some banks may block ATM use unless they are notified that you will be visiting the country beforehand. This is due to the frequency of ATM fraud in Malaysia.⁸⁷

*Currency exchange stand
© MJ Baumann*

Exchange 35: Please, buy something from me.

Local:	Please, buy something from me.	tolong beleesewaatoodaareesaaya
Soldier:	Sorry, I have no money left.	maa-aafsaaya teedaak aada waang laagee.

Credit cards are also widely accepted, mostly in urban areas. MasterCard, Visa, and American Express are the most commonly accepted. In rural areas, cards may be more difficult to use.⁸⁸



Traffic in Kuala Lumpur
© World Bank Photo Collection

Transportation

Cars and Traffic

Malaysian highways are generally well maintained although roads in low-lying areas may flood during the monsoon season. Traffic congestion can be severe, particularly in and around the capital of Kuala Lumpur. Drivers should be especially attentive to motorbike drivers because they weave in and out of traffic, ignore traffic lanes, and turn on red lights.^{89, 90}

Exchange 36: Is there a gas station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a gas station nearby?	dekaat sinee aada steyshans meenyaak?
Local:	Yes.	ya aada.

Exchange 37: Where can I rent a car?

Soldier:	Where can I rent a car?	dee maana saaya boley seywa kreyta?
Local:	Downtown.	dee poosaat baandaa.

Taxis and Pedicabs

Taxis are a relatively expensive way to get around cities. Long-distance shared taxis are available at a lower cost, but they will carry passengers on longer journeys and will not leave until they are full.⁹¹ Taxis may pose a risk to passengers, especially in the downtown area of the capital. Some taxi drivers have even robbed passengers. It is safer to arrange for a taxi than to hail one on the street, especially after dark. Make sure the taxi has a license, check to see that the photo matches the driver, and never get in the front seat. Taxis are not allowed to pick up additional fares so be wary if the driver attempts to do so.⁹²

Exchange 38: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	dekaat sinee aada kdaay mekaaneek yaang baagos?
Local:	Yes.	ya aada.

Exchange 39: Where can I get a taxi?

Soldier:	Where can I get a taxi?	dee maana boley saaya daapaatkaan teksee?
Local:	Over there.	dee saana.

A high number of international visitor complaints about Malaysian taxis have been brought to the attention of high-level government officials. These officials are concerned over its effects on tourism.⁹³ Taxis have meters, but many drivers prefer to negotiate the fare individually with passengers. This has led to complaints ranging from overcharging to extortion. If a fare seems too high, turn it down and wait for another.⁹⁴

Exchange 40: Which road leads to the airport?

Soldier:	Which road leads to the airport?	jaalaan maana menoojoo ke laapaangaan turbaang?
Local:	The road heading east.	jaalaan yaang meng-haala ke teemoor.

A network of pedicabs offers an alternative way to get around the cities.⁹⁵ Once popular everywhere, they have all but disappeared from Kuala Lumpur, though they continue to operate in the provinces.^{96, 97}

Exchange 41: Can you take me there?

Soldier:	Can you take me there?	boley andaa baawa saaya ke saana?
Local:	Yes, I can.	ya saaya boley.

Trains and Metros

The train system on the peninsula is modern and comfortable. There are two main lines. One line runs from Singapore to the capital and continues into Thailand. The second runs through the interior of the nation. A narrow-gauge railway also operates in Sabah in East Malaysia, running from Kota Kinabalu to Tenom.⁹⁸

Exchange 42: Is there a train station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a train station nearby?	dekaat sinee aada steyshnan kreytaapee?
Local:	No.	taak aada.

Exchange 43: Will the bus be here soon?

Soldier:	Will the bus be here soon?	baas eetoo aakaan teeaba sekejaap laagee?
Local:	Yes.	ya.

Kuala Lumpur has an extensive light rail system consisting of three lines that connect the major districts tourists are likely to travel.⁹⁹ Some metros have women-only coaches that are designed so Muslim women can travel separately from men. Segregated travel is voluntary and many women prefer it, since it offers protection from sexual harassment and unwanted sexual advances.^{100, 101}



City buses
© Ian Fuller

Buses

The bus system on the peninsula is excellent. Large cities have local buses, minibuses (*bas-mini*) and regional buses connecting to other destinations. In East Malaysia, bus travel between Sabah and Sarawak is easy and efficient. Roads from Sarawak to Kuching near the border with Brunei are rough in places and some roads in Sabah have unmarked hazards.¹⁰² Fatal incidents occur on intercity buses, especially at night.^{103, 104} Some local buses are for women only. The Rapid Lady bus service operates only during rush hours.¹⁰⁵ Bus passengers are advised to watch for pickpockets because busses are often crowded.¹⁰⁶



Police
© Sham Hardy

Street Crimes and Solicitations

Crime

The overall crime rate in Malaysia is medium. However, many crimes go unreported and Malaysia no longer provides official crime statistics. It is therefore difficult to know the extent of criminal activity in the country.^{107, 108} Most criminal activity against foreigners are crimes of opportunity such as pickpocketing, purse-snatching, and theft. Violent crimes committed against foreigners are relatively uncommon, but not unknown. Credit card fraud is not as pervasive as it once was, but is still a cause for concern.¹⁰⁹

There has been a recent uptick in crimes, especially in urban areas. The homicide rate has dropped since 2000, yet rapes have nearly doubled.¹¹⁰

In addition, terrorist groups are known to operate inside Malaysia. Jemaah Islamiyah and the Abu Sayyaf Group are two al Qaeda linked groups and are active in the region.

Either or both of these groups could pose a risk to civilians. Travelers should be alert to the possibility of terrorist activities. The U.S. Department of State advises against travel to eastern coastal resorts in Sabah, where kidnappings-for-ransom frequently occur. It also advises against travel to the Lahad Datu district because of insurgent activities.¹¹¹

Exchange 44: Did these people threaten you?

Soldier:	Did these people threaten you?	oraang oraang inee mengaanchaam aanda?
Local:	No.	teedaak



Beggar

© *chris@APL / flickr.com*

Beggars

Many beggars roam urban streets. Some are handicapped, but many are children. Some of these children actually work for criminal gangs.^{112, 113, 114} Many of the children begging in the streets are not Malaysians, but refugees from neighboring countries such as Cambodia and Myanmar.^{115, 116}

Begging has become a punishable offense in Malaysia. Buddhist monks who were not residents of Malaysia have been fined for aggressively soliciting alms.¹¹⁷ Malay's view most beggars as illegal immigrants (*pendatang asing*) who are ruining the country's good name.¹¹⁸ The number of beggars tends to increase during the Islamic month of Ramadan, when they can take advantage of the Muslim obligation to give alms to the needy.^{119, 120} Malaysians are generous and their

religious obligation to give alms during Ramadan means that coffee shop owners will often provide free meals to beggars.¹²¹

Exchange 45: Give me money.

Local:	Give me money.	buree saaya waang.
Soldier:	I don't have any.	saaya teedaak aada waang.

Endnotes

- 1 Central Intelligence Agency, “Malaysia: People and Society,” in *The World Factbook*, 7 January 2014, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>
- 2 Usman Yaakob, Tarmiji Masron, and Fujimaki Masami, “Ninety Years of Urbanization in Malaysia: A Geographical Investigation of Its Trends and Characteristics,” *Journal of Ritsumeikan Social Sciences and Humanities* 3 (2012): 83, http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/acd/re/k-rsc/hss/book/pdf/vol04_05.pdf
- 3 Boon-Thong Lee, “Urban Development in Malaysia: The Case for a More Holistic and Strategic Approach to Urbanization,” (paper presented at the Southeast Asian-German Summer School on Urban and Peri-Urban Developments: Structures, Processes and Solutions, University of Cologne, Koln, Germany, 16-19 October 2005), 3, http://www.forum-urban-futures.net/files/Malaysia%20_Lee%20Boon%20Thong_paper.doc
- 4 Usman Yaakob, Tarmiji Masron, and Fujimaki Masami, “Ninety Years of Urbanization in Malaysia: A Geographical Investigation of Its Trends and Characteristics,” *Journal of Ritsumeikan Social Sciences and Humanities* 3 (2012): 93, http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/acd/re/k-rsc/hss/book/pdf/vol04_05.pdf
- 5 Abdul Samad Hadi et al., “Critical Urbanisation Transitions in Malaysia: The Challenge of Rising Bernam to Linggi Basis Extended Mega Urban Region,” *Akademika* 81, no. 2 (2011): 15, [http://www.ukm.my/penerbit/akademika/ACROBATAKADEMIKA81-2/81\(2\)Chap2-locked.pdf](http://www.ukm.my/penerbit/akademika/ACROBATAKADEMIKA81-2/81(2)Chap2-locked.pdf)
- 6 Peter Stearns, ed., “Southeast Asia 1753–1914,” in *The Encyclopedia of World History*, 6th Ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 559.
- 7 Naomi Lindt, “36 Hours in Kuala Lumpur,” *New York Times*, 20 December 2009, <http://travel.nytimes.com/2009/12/20/travel/20hours.html>
- 8 Federal Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, “3: Issues and Challenges,” in *National Urbanisation Policy* (report, 8 August 2006), 25, <http://www.pmo.gov.my/dokumenattached/Dasar/dpn-engx.pdf>
- 9 Harold Schiffman, “A New Factor: Urban Squatter Settlements,” 31 December 1998, <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/messeas/maltamil/node3.html>
- 10 Usman Yaakob, Tarmiji Masron, and Fujimaki Masami, “Ninety Years of Urbanization in Malaysia: A Geographical Investigation of Its Trends and Characteristics,” *Journal of Ritsumeikan Social Sciences and Humanities* 3 (2012): 94, http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/acd/re/k-rsc/hss/book/pdf/vol04_05.pdf
- 11 Louise Dufлот, “Urbanization Policy in Malaysia and its Impacts,” (paper, McGill University, December 2012), 9, <http://graphitepublications.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Urbanization-Policy-in-Malaysia-and-its-Impacts.pdf>
- 12 Noor Mohammad, “Urban Environmental Pollution in Malaysia: A Case Study,” *British Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, no. 1 (December 2011): 48, <http://graphitepublications.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Urbanization-Policy-in-Malaysia-and-its-Impacts.pdf>
- 13 World Wildlife Fund, “Environmental Problems in Malaysia,” n.d., http://wwf.panda.org/who_we_are/wwf_offices/malaysia/environmental_problems_malaysia/
- 14 Numbeo, “Pollution in Kuala Lumpur,” 2014, http://www.numbeo.com/pollution/city_result.jsp?country=Malaysia&city=Kuala+Lumpur
- 15 Federal Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, “3: Issues and Challenges,” in *National Urbanisation Policy* (report, 8 August 2006), 15, <http://www.pmo.gov.my/dokumenattached/Dasar/dpn-engx.pdf>
- 16 World Wildlife Fund, “Environmental Problems in Malaysia,” n.d., http://wwf.panda.org/who_we_are/wwf_offices/malaysia/environmental_problems_malaysia/

- 17 Sharifah Norkhadijah, Syed Ismail, and Latifah Abd. Manaf, "The Challenge of Future Landfill: A Case Study of Malaysia," *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health Sciences* 5, no. 6 (June 2013): 91-92, http://www.academicjournals.org/article/article1379670911_Ismail%20and%20Manaf.pdf
- 18 Federal Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, "3: Issues and Challenges," in *National Urbanisation Policy* (report, 8 August 2006), 14, <http://www.pmo.gov.my/dokumenattached/Dasar/dpn-engx.pdf>
- 19 Federal Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, "3: Issues and Challenges," in *National Urbanisation Policy* (report, 8 August 2006), 22-23, <http://www.pmo.gov.my/dokumenattached/Dasar/dpn-engx.pdf>
- 20 Lee Yen Mun, "Expert: Traffic Congestion Can Be Eased," *Nation*, 20 May 2013, <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2013/05/20/Expert-Traffic-congestion-can-be-eased-But-consultant-concedes-solving-Klang-Valley-transport-woes-w.aspx/>
- 21 Soo Wern Jun, "Overdevelopment, Traffic Congestion in Jln Dutamas Raya Get Residents Fuming," *The Sun Daily*, 15 October 2013, <http://www.thesundaily.my/news/856430>
- 22 Elza Irdalynna, "End of Congestion," *FMT News*, 19 July 2013, <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/opinion/2013/07/19/end-of-congestion/>
- 23 Lee Yen Mun, "Expert: Traffic Congestion Can Be Eased," *Nation*, 20 May 2013, <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2013/05/20/Expert-Traffic-congestion-can-be-eased-But-consultant-concedes-solving-Klang-Valley-transport-woes-w.aspx/>
- 24 Sulochanah Nair, "Urban Poverty and Housing in Malaysia: Dilemmas and Challenges," (workshop presentation, Shelter Security and Social Protection for the Urban Poor and Migrants in Asia, Ahmedabad, India, 11-13 February 2009), 17, <http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/pdfdoc/SulochanaNair.pdf>
- 25 Federal Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, "3: Issues and Challenges," in *National Urbanisation Policy* (report, 8 August 2006), 17, <http://www.pmo.gov.my/dokumenattached/Dasar/dpn-engx.pdf>
- 26 Boon-Thong Lee, "Urban Development in Malaysia: The Case for a More Holistic and Strategic Approach to Urbanisation," (paper presented at the Southeast Asian-German Summer School on Urban and Peri-Urban Developments: Structures, Processes and Solutions, University of Cologne, Koln, Germany, 16-19 October 2005), 9, http://www.forum-urban-futures.net/files/Malaysia%20_Lee%20Boon%20Thong_paper.doc
- 27 Firrdhaus Sahabuddin, "Chapter 3: Social Housing in Kuala Lumpur and How it Relates to Local Environment," in *Traditional Values and Their Adaptation in Social Housing Design: Towards a New Typology and Establishment of 'Air House' Standard in Malaysia* (master's dissertation, School of Arts, Culture and Environment, University of Edinburgh, 2012), 27-28, http://www.academia.edu/2377418/Chapter_3_Social_Housing_in_Kuala_Lumpur_and_How_It_Relates_to_Local_Environment
- 28 Federal Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, "3: Issues and Challenges," in *National Urbanisation Policy* (report, 8 August 2006), 21, <http://www.pmo.gov.my/dokumenattached/Dasar/dpn-engx.pdf>
- 29 Federal Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, "3: Issues and Challenges," in *National Urbanisation Policy* (report, 8 August 2006), 17, 23, <http://www.pmo.gov.my/dokumenattached/Dasar/dpn-engx.pdf>
- 30 Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Malaysia Country Specific Information," 18

- December 2013, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_960.html#medical
- 31 Allianz, “Healthcare in Malaysia,” 2014, <http://www.allianzworldwidecare.com/healthcare-in-malaysia>
- 32 Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Malaysia Country Specific Information,” 18 December 2013, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_960.html#medical
- 33 Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, “Malaysia Health System Review,” *Health Systems in Transition* 3, no. 1 (2013): 15, 18, 43, http://www.wpro.who.int/asia_pacific_observatory/hits/series/Malaysia_Health_Systems_Review2013.pdf
- 34 Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, “Malaysia Health System Review,” *Health Systems in Transition* 3, no. 1 (2013): 70, http://www.wpro.who.int/asia_pacific_observatory/hits/series/Malaysia_Health_Systems_Review2013.pdf
- 35 Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, “Malaysia Health System Review,” *Health Systems in Transition* 3, no. 1 (2013): 53-54, http://www.wpro.who.int/asia_pacific_observatory/hits/series/Malaysia_Health_Systems_Review2013.pdf
- 36 Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, “Malaysia Health System Review,” *Health Systems in Transition* 3, no. 1 (2013): 70, http://www.wpro.who.int/asia_pacific_observatory/hits/series/Malaysia_Health_Systems_Review2013.pdf
- 37 Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, “Malaysia Health System Review,” *Health Systems in Transition* 3, no. 1 (2013): 72, http://www.wpro.who.int/asia_pacific_observatory/hits/series/Malaysia_Health_Systems_Review2013.pdf
- 38 Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, “Malaysia Health System Review,” *Health Systems in Transition* 3, no. 1 (2013): 75, http://www.wpro.who.int/asia_pacific_observatory/hits/series/Malaysia_Health_Systems_Review2013.pdf
- 39 Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, “Malaysia Health System Review,” *Health Systems in Transition* 3, no. 1 (2013): 83, http://www.wpro.who.int/asia_pacific_observatory/hits/series/Malaysia_Health_Systems_Review2013.pdf
- 40 Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council, Ministry of Health, Malaysia, “Healthcare Industry in Malaysia,” 2013, <http://www.mhtc.org.my/en/healthcare-industry-in-malaysia.aspx>
- 41 Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council, Ministry of Health, Malaysia, “Statistics,” 2013, <http://www.mhtc.org.my/en/statistics.aspx>
- 42 “Boosting Medical Tourism in Malaysia,” The Star Online, 20 September, 2013, <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Community/2013/09/20/Boosting-medical-tourism-in-Msia-Expo-acts-as-platform-for-stakeholders-in-healthcare-industry-to-ne.aspx/>
- 43 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Structure and Organization of the Education System,” in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 44 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Structure and Organization of the Education System,” in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 45 Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, “Malaysian Education: Education System of Malaysia,” 2009, <http://www.mohe.gov.my/educationmsia/education.php?article=system>
- 46 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “The Educational Process,” in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 47 United Nations Educational, Scientific and

- Cultural Organization, “Structure and Organization of the Education System,” in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 48 Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, “Malaysian Education: Education System of Malaysia,” 2009, <http://www.mohe.gov.my/educationmsia/education.php?article=system>
- 49 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Structure and Organization of the Education System,” in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 50 Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, “Malaysian Education: Education System of Malaysia,” 2009, <http://www.mohe.gov.my/educationmsia/education.php?article=system>
- 51 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Structure and Organization of the Education System,” in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 52 Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, “Malaysian Education: Education System of Malaysia,” 2009, <http://www.mohe.gov.my/educationmsia/education.php?article=system>
- 53 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “The Educational Process,” in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 54 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “The Educational Process,” in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 55 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “The Educational Process,” in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 56 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Structural Policy Country Notes: Malaysia*, (country report, 2013), 5, <http://www.oecd.org/dev/asia-pacific/Malaysia.pdf>
- 57 United Nations Children’s Fund, “More Girls than Boys Stay in Education to Advanced Level,” n.d., http://www.unicef.org/malaysia/gift_6069.html
- 58 Eduicon, “75% University Students Women in Malaysia,” 27 May 2013, <http://www.eduicon.com/Feature/Details/196.html>
- 59 U.S. Department of State, “2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia,” 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>
- 60 G. Vinod, “Religious Schools Need More Funds,” FMT News, 11 October 2012, <http://www.freemalysiatoday.com/category/nation/2012/10/11/religious-schools-need-more-funds/>
- 61 M. Bakri Musa, “Chapter 2: It’s More than just Education,” in *An Education System Worthy of Malaysia* (Lincoln, NE: Writers Club Press, 2003), 47.
- 62 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 6: Land of a Thousand Tastes,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 150-151.
- 63 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 6: Land of a Thousand Tastes,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 151-152.
- 64 Backpacking Malaysia, “Nasi Campur (Malay

- Mixed Rice),” n.d., <http://www.backpackingmalaysia.com/stories/nasi-campur-malay-mixed-rice>
- 65 John Krich, “Roti Canai,” *Wall Street Journal*, 31 July 2009, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124893513501192849.html>
- 66 Julia Moskin, “From Asia, Rapture in a Bowl,” *New York Times*, 6 January 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/07/dining/07laksa.html>
- 67 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 6: Land of a Thousand Tastes,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 154-156.
- 68 Robyn Eckhardt, “Food and Drink: Staples & Specialties,” in *Lonely Planet Kuala Lumpur, Melaka & Penang*. Joe Bindloss, and Celeste Brash, eds. (Footscray, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2008), 45.
- 69 eDiplomat, “Malaysia,” 2014, http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_my.htm
- 70 Kiat, “Malaysia Page – Travel Information,” n.d., <http://kiat.net/malaysia/travelinfo.html>
- 71 Who to Tip, “Tipping in Malaysia,” 2014, <http://www.whototip.net/tipping-in-malaysia>
- 72 Kuala Lumpur Shopper, “The Top Street and Night Markets in Kuala Lumpur,” n.d., <http://klshopper.com/46-street-markets-central-market.html>
- 73 Kuala Lumpur Shopper, “The Top Street and Night Markets in Kuala Lumpur,” n.d., <http://klshopper.com/46-street-markets-central-market.html>
- 74 abcKualaLumpur, “Shopping Areas-Night Markets/Pasar Malam,” 2012, http://abckualalumpur.com/info_guide/kl_nightmarket.htm
- 75 Wonderful Malaysia, “Top 10 Shopping Malls in Kuala Lumpur,” 2014, <http://www.wonderfulmalaysia.com/faq/top10-shopping-malls-in-kuala-lumpur.htm>
- 76 Sunway Pyramid, “Corporate Background,” 2014, <http://www.sunwaypyramid.com/background.asp>
- 77 Sunway Pyramid, “Announcements,” 2014, http://www.sunwaypyramid.com/announcements_MyFavorMall.asp
- 78 Maatic Tour and Travel, “Top Ten Malaysian Souvenir,” n.d., <http://www.maatictours.com/top-10/top-ten-malaysian-souvenir>
- 79 pktan, “How to Bargain and Hagggle in Malaysia,” *Travel Guide Malaysia*, 2 May 2007, <http://travelmalaysiaguide.com/shopping-in-malaysia-how-to-bargain/>
- 80 Lonely Planet, “Malaysia: Money and Costs,” 2014, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/malaysia/practical-information/money-costs>
- 81 Oanda, “Currency Converter,” 13 January 2014, <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>
- 82 Nancy Kerstettner, “Money Exchange in Malaysia,” *USA Today*, n.d., <http://traveltips.usatoday.com/money-exchange-malaysia-63156.html>
- 83 Hideko Takayama and Bradley K. Martin, “Nearly ‘Perfect’ Fake Dollars Complicate Korea Talks,” *Bloomberg*, 28 March 2007, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aOuds2awDwds>
- 84 Nancy Kerstettner, “Money Exchange in Malaysia,” *USA Today*, n.d., <http://traveltips.usatoday.com/money-exchange-malaysia-63156.html>
- 85 Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Malaysia: Special Circumstances,” 18 December 2013, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_960.html#special_circumstance
- 86 Nancy Kerstettner, “Money Exchange in Malaysia,” *USA Today*, n.d., <http://traveltips.usatoday.com/money-exchange-malaysia-63156.html>
- 87 Malaysia Travel Guide, “Money and Duty Free for Malaysia,” 2014, <http://www.worldtravelguide.net/malaysia/money-duty-free>
- 88 Malaysia Travel Guide, “Money and Duty Free for Malaysia,” 2014, <http://www.worldtravelguide.net/malaysia/money-duty-free>
- 89 Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau

- of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, “Malaysia 2013 Crime and Safety Report,” 27 March 2013, <https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=13812>
- 90 Kiat, “Malaysia Page – Travel Information,” n.d., <http://kiat.net/malaysia/travelinfo.html>
- 91 Lonely Planet, “Malaysia: Getting Around,” 2014, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/malaysia/transport/getting-around>
- 92 Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Malaysia Country Specific Information,” 18 December 2013, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_960.html#crime
- 93 “Malaysia’s Taxi Drivers ‘Worse Than Dirty Toilets’,” Brisbane Times, 14 December 2009, <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/travel/travel-news/malysias-taxi-drivers-worse-than-dirty-toilets-20091214-kqyd.html>
- 94 Lonely Planet, “Malaysia: Getting Around,” 2014, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/malaysia/transport/getting-around>
- 95 Angloinfo, “Public Transport in Malaysia,” 2014, <http://malaysia.angloinfo.com/transport/public-transport/>
- 96 Hotel Travel, “Malaysia Travel Guides,” 2014, <http://www.hoteltravel.com/malaysia/guides/transport.htm>
- 97 Guide Southeast Asia, “Melaka, Malaysia: Getting Around,” n.d., <http://www.guidesoutheastasia.com/malaysia-melaka-getting-around.php>
- 98 Lonely Planet, “Malaysia: Getting Around,” 2014, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/malaysia/transport/getting-around>
- 99 Kiat, “Kuala Lumpur Mass Transit,” n.d., <http://www.kiat.net/malaysia/KL/transit.html>
- 100 AFP, “Malaysia Launches Pink Women-Only Train Coaches,” Hindustan Times, 28 April 2010, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/malaysia-launches-pink-women-only-train-coaches/article1-536667.aspx>
- 101 Jastin Ahmad Tarmizi, “Cops to Ensure Safety in Women’s Only Komuter Coaches,” The Star Online, 4 November 2013, <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2013/11/04/women-cops-ops-cantas-khas.aspx/>
- 102 Lonely Planet, “Malaysia: Getting Around,” 2014, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/malaysia/transport/getting-around>
- 103 Lonely Planet, “Malaysia: Getting Around,” 2014, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/malaysia/transport/getting-around>
- 104 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government, “Malaysia: Local Travel,” 31 December 2013, <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw/cgi/view/Advice/Malaysia>
- 105 William Lee Adams, “Malaysia Starts Women-Only Bus Service to Fight Sexual Harassment,” Time NewsFeed, 2 December 2010, <http://newsfeed.time.com/2010/12/02/malaysia-starts-women-only-bus-service-to-fight-sexual-harassment/>
- 106 Australian High Commission, “Malaysia: Safety and Security,” n.d., http://www.malaysia.embassy.gov.au/klpr/safe_sec.html
- 107 Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, “Malaysia 2013 Crime and Safety Report,” 27 March 2013, <https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=13812>
- 108 Thomas Fuller, “Wave of High-Profile Crimes Has Put Malaysians on the Defensive,” *New York Times*, 18 October 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/20/world/asia/soaring-crime-rate-takes-a-growing-malaysia-by-surprise.html?_r=0
- 109 Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, “Malaysia 2013 Crime and Safety Report,” 27 March 2013, <https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=13812>
- 110 Thomas Fuller, “Wave of High-Profile Crimes Has Put Malaysians on the Defensive,” *New York Times*, 18 October 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/20/world/asia/soaring-crime-rate-takes-a-growing-malaysia-by-surprise.html?_r=0

[malaysia-by-surprise.html?_r=0](#)

111 Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Malaysia Country Specific Information,” 18 December 2013, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_960.html#safety

112 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 1: First Impressions,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 9.

113 “Mastermind Among 19 Beggars Rounded Up,” Borneo Post Online, 20 July 2013, <http://www.theborneopost.com/2013/07/20/mastermind-among-19-beggars-rounded-up/>

114 Danny Chen, “Syndicate Beggars Are Back in Suburbs of Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur,” Demotix, 11 September 2013, <http://www.demotix.com/news/2651439/syndicate-beggars-are-back-suburbs-bangsar-kuala-lumpur#media-2651327>

115 Farah Yasmin Binti Abd. Radzak, Mohd Norsadiq Bin Mohd Yusof, and Amir Syafiq Bin Abd Aziz, “Improving Human Rights in Malaysia: The Challenge of Child Beggars,” (presentation, n.d.), http://www.eubios.info/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/YPA6APYasminSadiqAmir.15574613.pdf

116 “Malaysia-A Foreign Beggars’ Haven,” The Star Online, 23 August 2010, <http://www.thestar.com.my/story.aspx?file=%2f2010%2f8%2f23%2fnation%2f6902765&sec=nation>

117 Sukhpreet Manchanda, “Begging Chinese Monk Fined for Threatening Malaysians.” TopNews.in, 6 October 2009, <http://topnews.in/begging-chinese-monk-fined-threatening-malaysians-2221175>

118 Malaysiaku Sayang, “Chinese Beggars in Malaysia,” 23 April 2009, <http://malaysiakusayang.blogspot.com/2009/04/chinese-beggars-in-malaysia.html>

119 “George Town a Hive of Activity for Beggars During Ramadan Month,” The Star Online, 24 July 2013, <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2013/07/24/Ramadan-Beggars-Penang.aspx/>

120 Nik Mahadi, “Ramadhan: Increased Income of

Beggars in Kota Bharu,” allvoices.com, 3 August, 2011, <http://www.allvoices.com/contributed-news/9847522-ramadhan-increased-income-of-beggars-in-kota-bharu>

121 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 1: First Impressions,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 8.

Overview: Chapter 4 Assessment

1. Approximately three out of every four Malaysians live in urban centers.

TRUE

Malaysia gained its independence in 1963. Since then, it has transformed into a predominantly urban nation with nearly 73% of the total population living in urban centers.

2. Urbanization has increased the quality of life for most city dwellers.

FALSE

Housing in many urban areas lack basic infrastructure. Low rates of education are also prevalent, while crime, delinquency, and drug use are high. All of these factors have led to a decline in the overall quality of urban life.

3. Malaysia's comprehensive healthcare system is on par with Western nations, especially in the larger cities.

TRUE

Malaysia's comprehensive healthcare system is good in the larger cities. In recent years, Malaysia has become a destination for medical tourists seeking quality, relatively inexpensive care.

4. Public school education is free and compulsory through high school.

FALSE

Primary education (grades 1-6) is compulsory and free.

5. Bargaining is expected in Malaysia's markets.

TRUE

Bargaining is expected in Malaysia's traditional markets.



Rice fields
© Khairil Faizi

Chapter 5: Rural Life

Introduction

Malaysia has transformed from an agricultural country to a modern industrialized nation. Today, only 27% of the population is rural.¹ The importance of agriculture to the nation and the economy has declined steadily since 1970. It now accounts for only slightly more than 11% of GDP.² Most agricultural crops are industrial crops such as palm oil, rather than food crops. The percentage of food crops shrinks each year.³ Currently, only 12% of the land is currently devoted to permanent crops, while 73% is devoted to the more lucrative industrial crops.⁴ The main food crop, rice, is predominantly grown on small paddy averaging approximately 1 ha (2.5 ac).^{5,6} The vast majority of the nation's 296,000 farmers are ethnic Malays (65%) although there are sizable Chinese (22%) and Indian (13%) components.^{7,8}

Agriculture accounts for a relatively small part of GDP. However, it is still an important sector due to Malaysia's concern with food security. The sector is strategically and politically important because of its role in national unity. Much of the agricultural policy of the last 35 years has been firmly rooted in the nation's Bumiputra policy, which is intended to place 30% of national wealth in the hands of ethnic Malays. This means that the majority of farmers are Malay and they are the largest beneficiary of agricultural reforms.⁹

Poverty is a largely rural phenomenon in Malaysia, where more than 50% of rural households have been designated poor.^{10,11} Nationally, two-thirds of all poor households live in rural areas.¹² Approximately 4.5% of the rural population falls below the official

poverty line.¹³ Many younger Malays are migrating to the cities leaving an elderly population behind, in part due to the subsistence nature of farming.^{14,15,16} As a result, nearly two-thirds of the people employed in farming today are over the age of 50.¹⁷ Finally, much of the rural infrastructure is old and crumbling and is inadequate.¹⁸



Tea farm
© Jess Cheng

Land Ownership and Distribution

In the early 1900s, the British colonial government created ethnic Malay reservations in the peninsula. The program was designed to protect Malay farmers from becoming landless, due to the transfer of land to non-Malays and rubber companies.¹⁹

Exchange 46: Do you own this land?

Soldier:	Do you own this land?	aanda memeeleekke taanaah inee?
Local:	Yes.	ya.

Exchange 47: Where do you work?

Soldier:	Where do you work, sir?	dee maana enchik bekurja?
Local:	I am a farmer, sir.	saaya pekebon enchik.

Eastern Malaysia fell under a different type of expatriate governance.²⁰ North Borneo, present-day Sabah, was a British protectorate where the government claimed custody of all land not under continuous cultivation.²¹

Exchange 48: How many people live in this house?

Soldier:	How many people live in this house?	braapa orang yang teeng-gaal daalam roomaah inee?
Local:	Six.	enaam.

The current Malaysian land ownership system continues to be based on the British Torrens system, which requires landowners to register their land and to receive a certification of ownership.²² Many rural Malay lands have been lost in recent years. Some rural land was seized because some farmers were unable to repay loans. Other land was seized by the government under the right of eminent domain to develop nearby urban centers. Family disputes also led to a fragmentation of plots. Because plots of less than .4 ha (1 ac) are prohibited under Malaysia's legal system, many Malay have sold their small shares.²³

New land reform policies are tied to national social and economic objectives, with an eye toward transforming landless peasants into landowners. This policy is similar to cooperative settlements in the Israeli kibbutz system. Each home in a village is given 0.1 ha (0.25 ac) of land as a garden. Crop lands are divided into blocks worked by 15-25 people until plants have matured. Following maturation, the land is reapportioned to each settler by lottery for 99 years. The land cannot be subdivided or subleased during that period. The government pays administrative costs but farmers are responsible for clearing and planting the land.²⁴



Fish farm
© World Fish / flickr.com

Economy

Agriculture accounts for approximately 11% of GDP and employs 11% of the population.²⁵ It is subdivided into three main subsectors: agro-industrial, food, and other. The agro-business sector is comprised mostly of palm oil, rubber, cocoa, and timber grown mostly for export. In addition to rice, the food subsector includes fruits, vegetables, livestock, and fishing. The third subsector serves both the domestic and export market. It includes tobacco, coconuts, sugarcane, maize, tea, and coffee.²⁶ Only 13% of the national budget is reserved for agricultural and rural development, including infrastructure and rice supports.²⁷

Exchange 49: Are you the only person in your family who has a job?

Soldier:	Are you the only person in your family who has a job?	aanda se-orang saaja daalaam kelowaarga yang mempoonyai pekurjaan?
Local:	No.	teedaak.

Farming rarely generates sufficient income to provide for Malaysian farmers. As a result, only about 39% of farmers claim agriculture as their full-time employment.²⁸ Many rural residents work in non-farm activities, including manufacture and trade, and much as 75% of rural incomes are non-farm related.^{29, 30}



Longboats in the river
© Audrey Low

Transportation

Rural Malaysia lacks any significant transportation infrastructure, particularly in East Malaysia. For example, there are no rail lines in the state of Sarawak connecting villages with larger towns and cities. In the most remote villages, residents may lack any kind of direct access to transportation services. As the government scrambles to build more roads, inland waterways have become a reasonable alternative to move people and goods.³¹ People on river ways travel by longboat, speedboats, or small paddleboats, although residents frequently complain about the safety, reliability, and cost of passenger services.³²

Roads in rural areas can be poorly maintained and drivers often fail to observe rules of the road, particularly in East Malaysia. Highland roads are often impassable during the rainy season. Driving at night poses additional hazards and should be avoided.³³ The only long-distance road in Sarawak runs along the coast between Kuching and Miri. The state of Sabah has few passable roads in the interior, although the coastal highway from Kota Kinabalu is good.³⁴ Taxis in rural Malaysia function like buses and, unlike in cities, it is common for drivers to stop en route to pick up additional passengers.^{35, 36} Intercity buses now travel to some smaller towns. In smaller towns and villages, minibuses and pickup trucks are common ways to navigate the territory.³⁷



Clinic nurse
© Phalinn Ooi

Healthcare

Providing medical services is a priority for the Malay government. This has enabled 90% of Malaysians to enjoy convenient access to health care and health care facilities. However, in remote rural areas healthcare may be unavailable and the quality of care often falls below the standards in urban areas.³⁸ To help address this shortage, mobile clinics operate in some regions.³⁹ Pharmacies are also scarcer in rural areas and paramedics at local clinics are often responsible for dispensing medications.⁴⁰

Exchange 50: Is there a health center nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a health center nearby?	dekaat sinee aada poosaat keseyaataan?
Local:	Yes, over there.	ya dee saanaa.

Primary care in rural areas is often provided by the Village Health Promoter (VHP) program, which operates in thousands of villages throughout the nation. These facilities are staffed by volunteers who have received two weeks of training in general healthcare and first-aid from a local health facility.^{41,42} The Flying Doctor Service is another program that provides greater healthcare access. Each team has a medical officer, medical assistant, and two community nurses who visit remote locations four to six times a year. The service also transports seriously ill patients to larger hospitals for advanced care.⁴³

Exchange 51: Can you help me?

Soldier:	Can you help me?	boley andaa tolong saaya?
Local:	Yes.	ya boley.

Traditional healthcare is strongly embedded in the Malay culture. It is estimated that 80% of rural residents, particularly the ethnic Malay, seek treatment from traditional medical practitioners (*bomoh*) at some point during their lives.⁴⁴ A *bomoh* may be an Islamic faith healer who bases his treatment on the Quran, or a healer who uses folk medicines.^{45,46} Some rural residents prefer to seek treatment from a *bomoh* before seeking treatment at a health facility, especially for musculoskeletal problems and for breast cancer.^{47,48,49} Others prefer to combine Western and traditional medicine for treatment.⁵⁰



School

© prizepony / flickr.com

Education

Public primary school encompasses grades 1-6. It is free and compulsory for all students.^{51, 52} The curriculum includes three hours of Islamic religious studies.⁵³ Students who pass an evaluation test at the end of the sixth year may opt to attend secondary school. Secondary school is also free, but not compulsory.⁵⁴ Secondary school is divided into two cycles: lower secondary and upper secondary school. Lower secondary school lasts for three years for Malays (four for Chinese and Indian students). Students who pass the test at the end of this cycle may go on to two years of upper secondary school. After passing

the upper-secondary examination, then attending and passing an additional year of preparatory school, and then passing university entrance exams, students may attend higher education.^{55, 56} Higher education includes both public and private institutions.^{57, 58}

Students may opt to attend religious rather than public schools. The government provides funds for some Islamic schools which agree to government oversight. In these schools, the government-approved curriculum must be offered in addition to any other instruction required by the school.⁵⁹ According to one estimate, approximately 30% of Malaysian students currently study in more than 2,000 religious schools.⁶⁰

Considerable gaps in education are obvious between rural and urban students. Urban students generally perform better on national tests.⁶¹ Rural schools lag behind urban schools due to poor infrastructure and a shortage of qualified teachers. These problems cause poorer performance among rural students.⁶² Nearly 40% of rural students drop out before making it to secondary school. The long process to pass through secondary school and financial factors are the major contributing factors.⁶³

Distance learning and e-learning have been introduced to help improve access and performance. Preliminary results have been encouraging. These results show both improved performance and an increased interest in education among rural residents.^{64, 65}

Exchange 52: Is there a school nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a school nearby?	dekaat sinee aada skolaah?
Local:	Yes.	ya aada.



Village elders
© Howie Weiner

Who's in Charge

Local governments fall under the jurisdiction of the state and represent the third tier of governance below federal and state governments.⁶⁶ The administration of the states is divided into three sub-levels: *daerah* (district), *mukim* (sub-district), and *kampong* (village). The district is also referred to as a town and has a population of 10,000. A mukim has a population below 10,000. Town heads are known as Mayors (*Datuk Bandar*), who are elected officials. The mukim is headed by a *penghulu*, who is appointed by the State Public Service Commission. The *penghulu*'s

main responsibilities are to assist federal and state-level agencies in development projects.^{67, 68}

Exchange 53: Do you know this area?

Soldier:	Do you know this area very well?	aanda taaw kaawaasaan inee dengaam baayik?
Local:	Yes.	ya.

Exchange 54: Does your mayor live here?

Soldier:	Does your mayor live here?	datuk baandaa aanda teeng-gaal dee sinee?
Local:	Yes.	ya.

The village head is called *ketua kampung*, is the lowest position in the administrative hierarchy and is appointed by the Chief Minister of the state.⁶⁹ Unlike other officials, *ketua kampung*s are not public servants even though they receive an allowance. Instead, they are seen as a representative of both state governments and local residents. Their main role is to assist the state government.⁷⁰ The *ketua kampung*s are also Chairs of the Village Development and Security Committee (JKKK).^{71, 72} These committees are tasked with providing more participation for rural residents, and act as the “eyes and ears” of the government.⁷³ Committee members are appointed and must be younger than 65 years of age.⁷⁴ These committees have become increasingly important in Malaysian politics because of their ability to harness kinship ties and garner election support for candidates.⁷⁵ Some in the nation regard both the *ketua kampung*s and the JKKK as agents to control votes for the federal government, rather than grassroots political agents.⁷⁶

Exchange 55: Can you take me to your mayor?

Soldier:	Can you take me to your mayor?	boley anda baawa saaya burjoompa datuk baandaa?
Local:	Yes.	ya boley.

Exchange 56: We need your advice.

Soldier:	Respected mayor , we need your help / advice / opinion.	datuk baandaa yaang dee hormatee kaamee purlookaan baantooaan / naasey haat / pendaapaat anda
Local:	Yes.	ya.



*Sea checkpoint
© Behan / flickr.com*

Border Crossings and Checkpoints

Land and border crossing are simple, although the crossings to Thailand may be dangerous. In early 2014, crossing through the Hat Yai region, crossing between Keroh and Betong, and between Kota Bharu and Rantau Panjan were discouraged due to ongoing violence.⁷⁷

Sea crossings are another option. Ferries leave to international destinations from George Town, Melaka, and Pulau. In Sabah it is possible to catch twice-weekly passenger ferries to the Philippines. It is also possible to catch a ferry between Pulau

Langkawi to Satun, Thailand but entry is expensive.⁷⁸

Sobriety checkpoints are a common feature in Malaysia. All drivers who are stopped must submit to breathalyzer tests.⁷⁹

Exchange 57: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

Soldier:	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	dee maana pondok pemereeksaa aan turdekaat?
Local:	It's two kilometers.	eeya nya doer keelomeetur jaaw.

In East Malaysia, east Sabah has been designated as a security zone due to insurgent activity in the region. A security command and numerous checkpoints have been set up along the roads.^{80, 81}

Exchange 58: Is this all the ID you have?

Soldier:	Is this all the ID you have?	inee saaja kaad pengenaalaan deeree yaang aanda aada?
Local:	Yes.	ya.

At police checkpoints drivers are required to stop their car and roll down the window. Officers may ask for documents. However, drivers should first ask to see the police credentials before surrendering identity cards and driver's licenses. Drivers are not obligated to obey an order to stop when given by a plain clothes officer, because such officers have no authority to stop a car. Drive to the nearest police station and lodge a report.⁸²

Exchange 59: Please get out of the car.

Soldier:	Please get out of the car.	tolong keloar daaree kereyta inee.
Local:	OK.	baayiklaah.

At border crossings cars must stop and open their trunk. Drivers must furnish appropriate entry/exit documents and passports. Police may inspect vehicle registration documents.⁸³

Exchange 60: Show us the car registration.

Soldier:	Show us the car registration.	toonjuk-kaan kaamee pendaaftaraan kereyta inee.
Local:	OK.	baayiklaah.

Exchange 61: Are you carrying any guns?

Soldier:	Are you carrying any guns?	aanda baawa sbaaraang senjaata?
Local:	No.	teedak.



*Malaysian - Thai border
© Marufish / flickr.com*

Landmines

In 1997, Malaysia signed the Mine Ban treaty but did not ratify it until two years later. The country has never used, nor produced antipersonnel mines, although it has imported and stockpiled such weapons. The nation's stockpile was completely destroyed in 2001.⁸⁴ The nation is considered to be free of mines, although this status has not been independently verified and there are areas where contamination is suspected.⁸⁵ The Thai border area with Malaysia is known to be contaminated with mines and may be on the Malaysian side.⁸⁶

Endnotes

- 1 Central Intelligence Agency, "Malaysia: People and Society," 7 January 2014, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>
- 2 Central Intelligence Agency, "Malaysia: Economy," 7 January 2014, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>
- 3 Md. Mahmudul Alam et al., "Socioeconomic Profile of Farmer in Malaysia: Study on Integrated Agricultural Development Area in North-West Selangor," *Agricultural Economics and Rural Development* Year VII, no. 2 (2010): 249-250, http://www.academia.edu/392420/Socioeconomic_Profile_of_Farmer_in_Malaysia_Study_on_Integrated_Agricultural_Development_Area_in_North-West_Selangor
- 4 Elenita C. Daño and Erna D. Samonte, "Public Sector Intervention in the Rice Industry in Malaysia," (paper, Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment, 2011), 194, http://www.zef.de/module/register/media/2692_6MALAYSIA.pdf
- 5 Md. Mahmudul Alam et al., "Socioeconomic Profile of Farmer in Malaysia: Study on Integrated Agricultural Development Area in North-West Selangor," *Agricultural Economics and Rural Development* Year VII, no. 2 (2010): 250, 252, http://www.academia.edu/392420/Socioeconomic_Profile_of_Farmer_in_Malaysia_Study_on_Integrated_Agricultural_Development_Area_in_North-West_Selangor
- 6 Elenita C. Daño and Erna D. Samonte, "Public Sector Intervention in the Rice Industry in Malaysia," (paper, Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment, 2011), 188, http://www.zef.de/module/register/media/2692_6MALAYSIA.pdf
- 7 Md. Mahmudul Alam et al., "Socioeconomic Profile of Farmer in Malaysia: Study on Integrated Agricultural Development Area in North-West Selangor," *Agricultural Economics and Rural Development* Year VII, no. 2 (2010): 249-250, http://www.academia.edu/392420/Socioeconomic_Profile_of_Farmer_in_Malaysia_Study_on_Integrated_Agricultural_Development_Area_in_North-West_Selangor
- 8 Elenita C. Daño and Erna D. Samonte, "Public Sector Intervention in the Rice Industry in Malaysia," (paper, Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment, 2011), 188, 193, http://www.zef.de/module/register/media/2692_6MALAYSIA.pdf
- 9 Elenita C. Daño and Erna D. Samonte, "Public Sector Intervention in the Rice Industry in Malaysia," (paper, Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment, 2011), 189-193, http://www.zef.de/module/register/media/2692_6MALAYSIA.pdf
- 10 United Nations Development Programme, *Malaysia Inland Waterway Transport System in Sarawak* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: United Nations Development Programme, 2008), 8-9, <http://www.undp.org.my/uploads/SIWT-2008.pdf>
- 11 Zulkarnain A. Hatta and Isahaque Ali, "Poverty Reduction Policies in Malaysia: Trends, Strategies and Challenges," *Asian Culture and History* 5, no. 2 (2013):49, 52, <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ach/article/viewFile/25475/15802>
- 12 United Nations Development Programme, "UNDP Country Programme for Malaysia, 2013-2015," (report, 27 July 2012), 2, http://www.undp.org.my/files/editor_files/files/CP_MAL_2013-2015.pdf
- 13 Zulkarnain A. Hatta and Isahaque Ali, "Poverty Reduction Policies in Malaysia: Trends, Strategies and Challenges," *Asian Culture and History* 5, no. 2 (2013):49, 52, <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ach/article/viewFile/25475/15802>
- 14 Ibrahim Ngah, *Rural Development in Malaysia* (monograph, Centre for Innovative Planning Development, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2010), 28, <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ach/article/viewFile/25475/15802>
- 15 Ronald Skeldon, "Ageing of Rural Populations in South-East and East Asia, Part 1," Sustainable Development Department, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, April 1999, <http://www.fao.org/sd/wpdirect/wpan0028.htm>
- 16 Asan Ali Golam Hassan, "Chapter 4: Patterns of Regional Demographic Change and Regional Inequality," in *Growth, Structural Change, and Regional Inequality in Malaysia* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), 126.

- 17 Idris Jala, "Agriculture is a Sector that is Still Important to Malaysia's Economy," *The Star Online*, 30 September 2013, <http://www.thestar.com.my/Business/Business-News/2013/09/30/Agriculture-is-a-sector-that-is-still-important-to-Malaysia-s-economy.aspx/>
- 18 Ibrahim Ngah, *Rural Development in Malaysia* (monograph, Centre for Innovative Planning Development, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2010), 28, <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ach/article/viewFile/25475/15802>
- 19 Phin-Keong Voon, "Rural Land Ownership and Development in the Malay Reservations of Peninsular Malaysia," in *South East Asian Studies* 14, no. 4 (March 1977): 496, <http://kyoto-seas.org/pdf/14/4/140402.pdf>
- 20 Leslie Potter, "Chapter 3: Native Customary Land: The Trust as a Device for Land Development in Sarawak: Defining Native Customary Rights to Land," in *State, Communities and Forests in Contemporary Borneo*, Fadzilah Majid Cooke, ed. (Canberra, Australia: Australian National University Press, 2005), http://epress.anu.edu.au/apem/borneo/mobile_devices/ch03s02.html
- 21 Su Mei Toh and Kevin T. Grace, "Case Study: Sabah Forest Ownership" (paper, Global Forestry Services, 2005), 257, <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/009/J8167e/J8167e10.pdf>
- 22 "Land Ownership System—Basic Information and Developments," in *Malaysia: Land Ownership and Agricultural Laws Handbook*, Vol. 1 (Washington DC: International Business Publications, 2013): 39.
- 23 J. Hamzah et al., "Development Process and Its Implication on the Native Land Ownership," *Asian Social Science Journal* 9, no. 14 (2013): 19, <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ass/article/download/31181/18237>
- 24 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Land Reform: Southeast Asia," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/329193/land-reform/61990/Southeast-Asia>
- 25 Central Intelligence Agency, "Malaysia: Economy," 7 January 2014, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>
- 26 Elenita C. Daño and Erna D. Samonte, "Public Sector Intervention in the Rice Industry in Malaysia," (paper, Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment, 2011), 189-190, http://www.zef.de/module/register/media/2692_6MALAYSIA.pdf
- 27 Elenita C. Daño and Erna D. Samonte, "Public Sector Intervention in the Rice Industry in Malaysia," (paper, Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment, 2011), 199, http://www.zef.de/module/register/media/2692_6MALAYSIA.pdf
- 28 Norsida Man and Sami Ismaila Sadiya, "Off-Farm Employment Participation among Paddy Farmers in the Muda Agricultural Development Authority and Kemasin Semarak Granary Areas of Malaysia," *Asia-Pacific Development Journal* 16, no. 2 (December 2009): 141, http://www.unescap.org/pdd/publications/apdj_16_2/7_Man_Sadiya.pdf
- 29 Norsida Man and Sami Ismaila Sadiya, "Off-Farm Employment Participation among Paddy Farmers in the Muda Agricultural Development Authority and Kemasin Semarak Granary Areas of Malaysia," *Asia-Pacific Development Journal* 16, no. 2 (December 2009): 142, http://www.unescap.org/pdd/publications/apdj_16_2/7_Man_Sadiya.pdf
- 30 Eric C. Thompson, "Rural Villages as Socially Urban Spaces in Malaysia," *Urban Studies* 41, no. 12 (November 2004), 2362, 2265, <http://profile.nus.edu.sg/fass/socect/Thompson%202004%20Urban%20Studies.pdf>
- 31 United Nations Development Programme, *Malaysia Inland Waterway Transport System in Sarawak* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: United Nations Development Programme, 2008), iii, 4, 10, 11, <http://www.undp.org.my/uploads/SIWT-2008.pdf>
- 32 United Nations Development Programme, *Malaysia Inland Waterway Transport System in Sarawak* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: United Nations Development Programme, 2008), 11, <http://www.undp.org.my/uploads/SIWT-2008.pdf>
- 33 World Travel Guide, "Getting Around Malaysia," 2014, <http://www.worldtravelguide.net/malaysia/getting-around>
- 34 Andrew Forbes and E. Ulrich Katz, "Travel Information," in *Malaysia and Singapore* (London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2013), 349. Allianz, "Healthcare in Malaysia," 2014, <http://www.allianzworldwidecare.com/healthcare-in-malaysia>

- 35 Angloinfo, "Bus and Coach Travel," 2014, <http://malaysia.angloinfo.com/transport/public-transport/buses-and-coaches/>
- 36 World Travel Guide, "Getting Around Malaysia," 2014, <http://www.worldtravelguide.net/malaysia/getting-around>
- 37 Andrew Forbes and E. Ulrich Katz, "Travel Information," in *Malaysia and Singapore* (London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2013), 349.
- 38 Allianz, "Healthcare in Malaysia," 2014, <http://www.allianzworldwidecare.com/healthcare-in-malaysia>
- 39 Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, "Malaysia Health System Review," *Health Systems in Transition* 3, no. 1 (2013): 71, http://www.wpro.who.int/asia_pacific_observatory/hits/series/Malaysia_Health_Systems_Review2013.pdf
- 40 Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, "Malaysia Health System Review," *Health Systems in Transition* 3, no. 1 (2013): 75, http://www.wpro.who.int/asia_pacific_observatory/hits/series/Malaysia_Health_Systems_Review2013.pdf
- 41 Lydia Lubon, "Village Health Promoters Bringing Care to Rural Communities in Malaysia," UNICEF, 26 May 2006, http://www.unicef.org/malaysia/media_4844.html
- 42 The Official Portal of the Sarawak Government, "Health," 2013, <http://www.sarawak.gov.my/en/residents/health>
- 43 The Official Portal of the Sarawak Government, "Health," 2013, <http://www.sarawak.gov.my/en/residents/health>
- 44 Mazanah Muhamad, Sharan Merriam, and Norhasmilia Suhami, "Why Breast Cancer Patients Seek Traditional Healers," *International Journal of Breast Cancer* 2012, (2012): 1, <http://downloads.hindawi.com/journals/ijbc/2012/689168.pdf>
- 45 Imad Alayoubi, "Malaysian Bohom Practitioners a Dying Breed," onislam.net, 14 January 2014, <http://www.onislam.net/english/health-and-science/science/429144-malaysian-bomoh-practitioners-a-dying-breed.html>
- 46 Mazanah Muhamad, Sharan Merriam, and Norhasmilia Suhami, "Why Breast Cancer Patients Seek Traditional Healers," *International Journal of Breast Cancer* 2012, (2012): 2, <http://downloads.hindawi.com/journals/ijbc/2012/689168.pdf>
- 47 Imad Alayoubi, "Malaysian Bohom Practitioners a Dying Breed," onislam.net, 14 January 2014, <http://www.onislam.net/english/health-and-science/science/429144-malaysian-bomoh-practitioners-a-dying-breed.html>
- 48 K.M. Ariff, "Preferential Utilization of Healthcare Systems by a Malaysian Rural Community for the Treatment of Musculoskeletal Injuries," *Medical Journal of Malaysia* 55, no. 4 (December 2000): 452-454, http://www.e-mjm.org/2000/v55n4/Musculoskeletal_Injuries.pdf
- 49 Mazanah Muhamad, Sharan Merriam, and Norhasmilia Suhami, "Why Breast Cancer Patients Seek Traditional Healers," *International Journal of Breast Cancer* 2012, (2012): 4-6, <http://downloads.hindawi.com/journals/ijbc/2012/689168.pdf>
- 50 Mazanah Muhamad, Sharan Merriam, and Norhasmilia Suhami, "Why Breast Cancer Patients Seek Traditional Healers," *International Journal of Breast Cancer* 2012, (2012): 4-6, <http://downloads.hindawi.com/journals/ijbc/2012/689168.pdf>
- 51 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Structure and Organization of the Education System," in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 52 Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, "Malaysian Education: Education System of Malaysia," 2009, <http://www.mohe.gov.my/educationmsia/education.php?article=system>
- 53 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "The Educational Process," in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 54 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Structure and Organization of the Education System," in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 55 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

- Organization, "Structure and Organization of the Education System," in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 56 Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, "Malaysian Education: Education System of Malaysia," 2009, <http://www.mohe.gov.my/educationmsia/education.php?article=system>
- 57 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Structure and Organization of the Education System," in *World Data on Education*, 7th ed., 2010-2011 (Malaysia: UNESCO, August 2011), http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Malaysia.pdf
- 58 Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, "Malaysian Education: Education System of Malaysia," 2009, <http://www.mohe.gov.my/educationmsia/education.php?article=system>
- 59 U.S. Department of State, "2012 Report on International Religious Freedom—Malaysia," 20 May 2013, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/519dd4ad18.html>
- 60 G. Vinod, "Religious Schools Need More Funds," FMT News, 11 October 2012, <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2012/10/11/religious-schools-need-more-funds/>
- 61 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Structural Policy Country Notes: Malaysia*, (country report, 2013), 5-6, <http://www.oecd.org/dev/asia-pacific/Malaysia.pdf>
- 62 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Structural Policy Country Notes: Malaysia*, (country report, 2013), 5, 7, <http://www.oecd.org/dev/asia-pacific/Malaysia.pdf>
- 63 Tan Choe Choe, "Transforming Rural Schools," *New Straits Times*, 18 April, 2013, <http://www.nst.com.my/nation/general/transforming-rural-schools-1.258169>
- 64 Cindy Hiew, Fauziah Haji Abdul Aziz, and Rozhan Mohammed Idrus, "Lifelong Learning through Distance Education for Rural Schools in Malaysia," *Asian Journal of Distance Education* 8, no. 2 (2010): 62-63, http://www.academia.edu/2839238/Lifelong_Learning_through_Distance_Education_for_Rural_Schools_in_Malaysia
- 65 Intel, "Research 1:1 eLearning Enriches Education in Malaysia," (report, 2012), 2-3, <http://www.intel.com/content/dam/www/program/education/us/en/documents/Intel%20Education%20Research%20Summary/intel-education-research-summary-malaysia.pdf>
- 66 Commonwealth Local Government Forum, "The Local Government System in Malaysia," in *Country Profile: Malaysia* (report, 2013) 91, http://www.clgf.org.uk/userfiles/1/file/Malaysia_Local_Government_Profile_2013_CLGF.pdf
- 67 Hariati Azizan and Rashvinjeet S. Bedi, "Villages in a Quandary," *The Malaysian Bar*, 6 April 2008, http://www.malaysianbar.org.my/news_features/villages_in_a_quandary.html?date=2009-11-01
- 68 *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, Malaysia: Rural Settlement," 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/359754/Malaysia/279154/Religion>
- 69 Eric C. Thompson, "Kampung," in *Unsettling Absences: Urbanism in Rural Malaysia* (Singapore: National University of Singapore, 2007), 48.
- 70 International Business Publications, "Administrative Machinery at the State Level," in *Malaysia: Country Study Guide* (Washington DC: International Business Publications, USA, 2013), 62-63.
- 71 International Business Publications, "Administrative Machinery at the State Level," in *Malaysia: Country Study Guide* (Washington DC: International Business Publications, USA, 2013), 62-63.
- 72 Murray Hunter, "Village Security and Development Committees (JKKK): The Frontline in Malaysia's Next General Election," *The Malaysian Insider*, 19 August 2013, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/sideviews/article/village-security-and-development-committees-jkkk-the-frontline-in-malaysias>
- 73 Murray Hunter, "Village Security and Development Committees (JKKK): The Frontline in Malaysia's Next General Election," *The Malaysian Insider*, 19 August 2013, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/sideviews/article/village-security-and-development-committees-jkkk-the-frontline-in-malaysias>

[development-committees-jkkk-the-frontline-in-malaysias](#)

74 Adie Suri Zulkefli and Ili Shazwani, “PM Announces Age Cap for New JKKK Committee Members,” New Straits Times, 21 July 2013, <http://www.nst.com.my/latest/pm-announces-age-cap-for-new-jkkk-committee-members-1.323786?localLinksEnabled=false/Article>

75 Murray Hunter, “Village Security and Development Committees (JKKK): The Frontline in Malaysia’s Next General Election,” The Malaysian Insider, 19 August 2013, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/sideviews/article/village-security-and-development-committees-jkkk-the-frontline-in-malaysias>

76 Murray Hunter, “Village Security and Development Committees (JKKK): The Frontline in Malaysia’s Next General Election,” The Malaysian Insider, 19 August 2013, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/sideviews/article/village-security-and-development-committees-jkkk-the-frontline-in-malaysias>

77 Lonely Planet, “Malaysia: Getting There and Away,” 2014, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/malaysia/transport/getting-there-away>

78 Lonely Planet, “Malaysia: Getting There and Away,” 2014, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/malaysia/transport/getting-there-away>

79 Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Malaysia Country Specific Information,” 18 December 2013, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_960.html#traffic_safety

80 Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Malaysia Country Specific Information,” 18 December 2013, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_960.html#safety

81 “Another Attempted Intrusion into Sabah Intercepted, Says IGP,” The Malay Mail Online, 10 January 2014, <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/another-attempted-intrusion-into-sabah-waters-foiled-says-igp>

82 Malaysian Explorer, “Malaysian Police Scam,” 2012, <http://www.malaysian-explorer.com/malaysiaScams-stoppedByMalaysianPolice.html>

83 Expats in Singapore, “Travelling: Driving Up North to Malaysia and Thailand: Border Crossings,” 2014, <http://www.expatsingapore.com/content/view/1468>

[expatsingapore.com/content/view/1468](#)

84 Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, “Malaysia: Mine Ban Policy,” 28 October 2011, http://www.the-monitor.org/index.php/cp/display/region_profiles/theme/1974

85 Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, “Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor Factsheets: Humanitarian Mine Action,” n.d., <http://www.the-monitor.org/index.php/content/view/full/18728>

86 U.S. Department of State, “2013 To Walk the Earth in Safety: Asia,” 1 August 2013, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rpt/walkearth/2013/214129.htm>

Overview: Chapter 5 Assessment

1. Slightly more than one in four Malaysians lives in rural areas.

TRUE

Malaysia has transformed from an agricultural country to a modern industrialized nation. Today, only 27% of the population is rural.

2. Most agricultural lands are dedicated to the production of rice.

FALSE

Most agricultural lands are dedicated to important export products, such as palm oil and rubber which, together, take up 73% of the available lands. Only 12% is devoted to permanent food crops.

3. Approximately half of all rural residents are considered poor.

TRUE

Poverty is a largely rural phenomenon in Malaysia where more than 50% of rural households have been designated poor. Nationally, two-thirds of all poor households live in rural areas.

4. Few rural residents rely on traditional healers for medical treatment.

FALSE

Traditional healthcare is strongly embedded in the Malay culture. It is estimated that 80% of rural residents, particularly the ethnic Malay, seek treatment from traditional medical practitioners (bomoh) at some point during their lives.

5. Distance learning is an important tool for improving access to education in rural Malaysia.

TRUE

Distance learning and e-learning have been introduced to help improve access and performance. Preliminary results have been encouraging. These results show both improved performance and an increased interest in education among rural residents.



Malay family
© mohdrais / flickr.com

Chapter 6: Family Life

Introduction

Malays have traditionally lived in large extended families that often include more than three generations. The family's main role was to provide support and care for its members.¹ However, families and family structure changed as the nation transitioned from agrarian to urban-industrial. Families became smaller and the extended family gave way to the nuclear family.² ³ Regardless, family remains the basic social institution and the foundation of community life in Malaysia.⁴

Exchange 62: Does your family live here?

Soldier:	Does your family live here?	keloowaarga aanda teeng-gaal dee sinee?
Local:	Yes.	ya.

Malay kinship can be complicated because there are no definitive boundaries specifying who is related and who is not. Malay kinship reveals elements of patrilineal, matrilineal, and bilateral systems.^{5,6} For example, some Malay along the coastal regions of Peninsular Malaysia have retained their matrilineal system, based on clan groups with a specific territorial base.^{7,8} Most Malay families, however, trace their kinship bilaterally, from both the mother and the father. Although one may be “blood kin” based on lineage, anyone outside of the immediate family is regarded as a distant relative.⁹

Family is a central feature of Malay life, yet the divorce rate is higher than other ethnic groups.^{10,11} Estimates suggest that a Malay couple divorces every 15 minutes.^{12,13} Modernization pressures are one factor contributing to divorce rising rates, while a tolerance for divorce is firmly rooted in Malay culture. Historically, little stigma has been attached to divorce and the bilateral kinship system makes it possible for women to rely on their birth families for support.^{14,15}

The government recognizes pressures faced by families and has introduced a number of programs and policies designed to strengthen the family, such as the National Family Policy. The benefits individuals and it helps generate a more stable and cohesive nation.^{16,17,18}



Malaysian-Chinese parents
© C.K. Koay

Typical Household and Family Structure

The number of households in Malaysia increased in recent decades, indicating that smaller nuclear households were replacing the traditional extended family households. Now, the majority of Malay households are nuclear families. Household size has dropped to approximately 4 persons although rural households tend to be slightly larger with around 5 members.^{19,20}

Exchange 63: Are these people part of your family?

Soldier:	Are these people part of your family?	oraang-oraang inee sebaahgeeyaan daarepaada aahlee keloowaarga aanda?
Local:	No.	teedaak.

Reduced Malay fertility rates have contributed to the decline in family size. In 2010, the government reported that Malay fertility was 2.8 children.²¹ The changing role of Malay women is partly the reason for declines in fertility. Increases in marriage age, increases in access to educational opportunities, and increased participation have changed the size and shape of the Malay family.²²

Exchange 64: Are these your children?

Soldier:	Are these your children?	inee aanaak-aanaak andaa?
Local:	Yes.	ya.

Most Malay families have two-parents and are patriarchal. The husband is responsible for the economic well-being and protection of the family and the wife is charged with taking care of the domestic duties, including childcare.^{23, 24} Economic pressures and modernization have introduced changes to this traditional structure. Rising Malay divorce rates have created more single-parent families. Similarly, migration by one spouse has also created de-facto single parent homes. The female single-parent household is the fastest growing type in Malaysia.²⁵

The Status of Women

Among the Malay, women occupy a subordinate status.²⁶ According to the 2012 gender equality index, Malaysia ranks 43rd out of 146 nations.²⁷ This represents an increase in women’s status in recent years. Malaysia has made great strides in education for women, who now comprise 75% of all university students.^{28, 29}

In other areas, challenges to gender equity remain. In fundamentalist states such as Kelantan, gender segregation exists in many public spaces.³⁰ The rights of Malay women are restricted under the civil code of Shari’a law.³¹ However, the federal constitution does not explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex.³²



Woman and child
© Tian Yake

Exchange 65: Do you have any brothers?

Soldier:	Do you have any brothers?	aanda aada aabaang aataaw aadeyk lelaakee?
Local:	Yes.	ya aada.

Nearly half of all Malay women work, yet workplace discrimination is common. Private sector employers are free to pay lower wages to women, although in the public sector equal pay for equal work is mandated. Most working women remain concentrated in low-skilled and low-wage jobs.^{33, 34}

Exchange 66: Are you married?

Soldier:	Are you married?	aanda soodaah burkaaween?
Local:	Yes.	ya soodaah.

Women are free to participate in politics, although they remain underrepresented in political positions. Only a small fraction of prominent positions in parliament and government are filled by women.^{35, 36} Persistent negative attitudes and stereotypical thinking have made it difficult for women to break into higher positions in politics, or in the corporate world.^{37, 38}



Malay-Chinese family
© Mohd Nor Azmil Abdula

Status of Children the Elderly

Children

Children's rights improved greatly with the introduction of the Child Act in 2001, but there remain areas of concern.³⁹ Children who are born out of wedlock or within six months of their parents' marriage face serious legal and social hurdles. The government records the last names of Muslim children born out of wedlock as bin/binti Abdullah (son/daughter of Abdullah), rather than giving the father's name. Not only does this publicly identify the child as illegitimate, under Shari'a law, these children face loss of inheritance and guardianship.⁴⁰ The mother's citizenship status is automatically given to the child, which might mean they are not considered Malaysian citizens. As a result, they are ineligible for certain benefits and are at risk of becoming a "stateless person."⁴¹

If a child's birth is not registered within 42 days, the child might be regarded as undocumented and become ineligible to access protective and educational services.^{42, 43} This situation is most likely to arise among the poor who may have difficulty traveling to

registration centers, or who may lack the funds to pay registration fees. In cases of late birth registrations, parents must provide additional evidence of the birth in order to get a certificate.⁴⁴

Children who commit crimes receive no special consideration under the law. They can be subject to the death penalty and life imprisonment.⁴⁵ They can be held for long periods before a trial and are rarely segregated from the adult population.⁴⁶ Children who are deemed to be “beyond control” can be sentenced by the court to an “Approved School or Probation Hostel.” Parents may also make a request to place their child in such facilities. This is a common tactic used against girls, more so than boys. It used as a means to control inappropriate social behavior, such as drug use, premarital sex, or disobedience.⁴⁷



Elderly man
© tamahaji / flickr.com

The Elderly

In Malaysia, those over age 60 are officially classified as elderly.⁴⁸ The 2010 census revealed that approximately 6% of the Malay population was classified as senior citizens, but that number is projected to increase rapidly in the next decade.⁴⁹

For the Malay, age and seniority are two features of life that circumscribe family relations. Elder members of the family are given much respect and are an important source for advice and for resolving conflict.⁵⁰ Traditionally, elders were cared for by their children but changes in the Malay family structure have impacted the elder community.^{51, 52} Attitudinal shifts in familial responsibility toward the elderly are among the most important of such changes.

Only 14% of respondents in a recent survey felt family members should provide for the economic well-being of the elderly.⁵³ Even if the government provided no income to retirees, 38% of Malaysian family members and 58% of retirees felt that the elderly should provide for themselves. When asked about providing personal care to the elderly, 31% felt families should take the primary role in helping the elderly with personal care.⁵⁴ Only 40% of the elderly expected to live with their children after they retired.⁵⁵

In fact, families still provide support for the

elderly, especially women whose main source of income comes from family members.⁵⁶ Many elderly continued to work and in 2010 and nearly 187,000 elderly remain in the labor force.⁵⁷

Exchange 67: Did you grow up here?

Soldier:	Did you grow up here?	aandaa dee besaarkaan dee sincee?
Local:	No.	teedaak.

The government has formulated a National Policy on the Elderly, as a result of changing demographics and attitudes. Malay policy on the elderly is aimed at “creating a society of elderly people who are contented and possess a high sense of self-worth and dignity, by optimizing their self-potential and ensuring that they enjoy every opportunity as well as [the] care and protection [of] members of their family, society and nation.”⁵⁸

Exchange 68: Is this your entire family?

Soldier:	Is this your entire family?	inee semoowa aahlee keloowaarga aandaa?
Local:	Yes.	ya.



Malay wedding
© Tian Yake

Married Life, Divorce, and Birth

Marriage

Marriage is a rite of passage and most Malays do marry. The minimum legal age for marriage for both men and women is 18, but anyone under 21 must receive parental permission.⁵⁹ The average age for first marriage has declined in the last decade. The average age of first marriage for men is 28 and for women 28.6 years.⁶⁰

Ethnic Malay Marriages are guided by Shari’a law. Couples may be married by an Islamic official during a ceremony at which a marriage contract is signed. Within 14 days, the marriage must be

registered with the District Religious Office that issues a marriage certificate. Marriages that are not registered are not considered officially legal.⁶¹

Muslim tradition dictates that the man must pay a dowry to his bride. Typically there are two kinds of wedding dowries. The compulsory *mas kahwin* is fixed by state and local religious departments and is generally low. The *hantaran* is technically optional, but rarely avoidable. Many families choose to set this amount at much higher levels.⁶²

The average is usually between USD 3,044 and USD 5,479 for most moderate weddings but it can soar to USD 15,000.⁶³

Exchange 69: Is this your wife?

Soldier:	Is this your wife?	inee eestree aanda?
Local:	Yes.	ya.

Polygyny is legal for Malay Muslims and a man may have as many as four wives. Entering into legal polygynous marriages, however, requires legal permission from the Shari'a courts, which must provide written consent. To obtain consent, a man must justify his need to marry another woman and prove he is financially able to do so. The permission of the first wife is generally required.^{64, 65}



Malay men
© Kenneth Tan

Divorce

Divorce follows Shari'a law for the Malay.⁶⁶ Only marriages that have been officially registered and are at least two years old can be dissolved through divorce.⁶⁷ Divorce among the Malay is common and between 20% and 25% end in marriage, nearly double that of other groups.⁶⁸ Before a divorce, couples must attempt to reconcile with the help of a marriage tribunal. If reconciliation cannot be accomplished within six months, the tribunal issues a non-reconciliation certificate which is required before most divorce proceedings can continue.⁶⁹

Several types of divorce are possible. The first type is called *talaq*. This is when a husband announces "I divorce you" three times in front of the wife and an Islamic jurist.⁷⁰ Recently, Shari'a courts have upheld the use of text messages for the *talaq*. In one case, a man sent his wife a message saying he would end their marriage if she failed to return immediately from her mother's home, where she had sought refuge after a quarrel. The Shari'a court ruled that the husband had given his wife adequate notice and upheld the divorce.⁷¹

If a wife proves that her husband has violated the conditions of marriage, she may seek a judicial *taliq* divorce. If a woman offers to return her dowry or to pay her husband, and if he agrees, the court may grant a *tebus talaq* divorce.⁷²

Finally, the court can order a *fasakh* or dissolution of marriage. This type of divorce is granted if the wife can prove that her husband has abused her, been sent to prison, is insane, or suffers from leprosy or a sexually transmitted disease.⁷³

After a divorce has been granted, the court can order the husband to pay maintenance to his ex-wife and/or his children until they reach the age of 18. A woman has the right to retain any property she brought into the marriage. Women typically receive physical custody of the children, although the father retains primary guardianship rights. Girls

stay with their mothers until the age of 9 and boys until the age of 7, after which they may return to live with their father.^{74, 75}

Birth

Malay children are regarded as the most valuable asset in a marriage. Children are seen as gifts from God and a family with many children is regarded as prosperous, regardless of their financial situation.⁷⁶ The birth rate for males and females indicates that there is no particular bias for sons.⁷⁷ Malay use of modern contraceptive techniques is low (30%), which results in frequent unplanned pregnancies.⁷⁸ A general lack of knowledge about modern contraception methods contributes to poor family planning.^{79, 80}



Malay wedding
© En Shahdi

Family Social Events

Weddings

Malay weddings take place in two phases. The first part of the wedding is formal (*akad nikah*). This is when the couple signs a marriage contract formalizing their marriage.⁸¹ During this ritual, the groom presents the dowry money to his bride.⁸²

The next day (or several days after the *akad nikah*), the public wedding ceremony begins. In the morning, guests attend a party at the groom's home. Later that day, the groom, his guests, and a group of male musicians troop over to the bride's home. Once there, he pays a tax to the bride's

family.⁸³ The *bersanding* (bethronement) ritual follows when the couple sits on chairs (*pelamin*) on a raised dais. Guests sprinkle scented water and yellow rice on the couple. All guests receive a decorated egg with a flower (*bunga telur*) as a sign of fertility.^{84, 85} The wedding ends when the couple pays their respects to each family.⁸⁶

Exchange 70: I wish you both happiness.

Soldier:	I wish you both happiness.	saaya oochaapkaan slaamaat berbaahaagyaa kepada aanda berdoowa.
Local:	We are honored.	kaamee saangat bertreema kaasey.

Exchange 71: Congratulations on your wedding!

Soldier:	Congratulations on your wedding!	taaneeyaa aataas perkaahweenaan aanda!
Local:	We are honored you could attend.	kaamee saangat baanga aanda daapaat daataang.



Feast for the anniversary of a death
© Matthew Kang

Funerals

Malays try to bury their dead within 24 hours of death, following to Islamic Shari'a law.⁸⁷ As soon as a person dies, family members inform mosque officials and as many friends and relatives as possible. Everyone who has been notified is expected to attend the funeral.⁸⁸

The body is first laid out on a mat with a cloth suspended over it to protect it from dust. A pair of betel nut clippers is laid on the corpse's waist to keep the ghosts and ghouls away.⁸⁹ The body (*mayat*) is thoroughly washed by someone who is the same sex as the deceased, placed on a mat and covered with a white shroud. A fine veil is placed over the face so people can get a last look. Incense is burned and prayers recited.⁹⁰

The body is placed in a bottomless coffin and carried on the shoulders of male relatives to the cemetery. Once at the burial site, the body is removed and carefully aligned in the grave by two family members. The call to prayer is then issued.

After the grave has been filled in, mosque officials recite prayers and sprinkle the grave with sandalwood water and flower petals.^{91, 92}

Close friends and relatives are invited to the family's home on the third, seventh, fourteenth, fortieth, and hundredth day following the death.^{93, 94} Relatives and close friends are invited to the home of the deceased for a meal three days after the funeral. The official mourning period lasts for 40 days, during which several observances occur.⁹⁵ On the 7th, 20th, and 40th days, the family has a commemorative meal. On the 100th day anniversary of death, a wooden grave marker is typically set.⁹⁶ On this day, families often hold a small feast. Many Malays will mark the anniversary of the death each year.⁹⁷

Exchange 72: My condolences.

Soldier:	I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.	saaya eengen mengoochaapkaan taakzeeya kepaada andaa daan kelooaarga.
Local:	Thank you.	treema kaasey.

Exchange 73: Be strong.

Soldier:	Please be strong.	haaraap andaa taabaah.
Local:	We will try.	kaamee aakaan chooba.



Naik Buai ceremony
© Azfar Ahmad (thepatahtumbuh fotos)

Childhood Rituals

The *naik buai* ceremony is one of the first ceremonial rituals for a child. The infant is placed in a cradle of batik cloth decorated with flowers. The baby is then rocked while a poem, *marhaban zikr*, is recited.^{98, 99}

A small family celebration is held on the seventh day after the birth and the child receives his/her name. The baby is carried into the front room by male family members. Rice paste and rosewater are dabbed on the infant and the name is given. Betel nut juice, honey and salt are placed on the child's tongue with a gold ring to assure the child will speak eloquently with a sweet voice.¹⁰⁰

The first hair-cutting (*cukur jambul*) for a baby is a ceremonial event, to which relatives and friends are invited. *Cukur jambul* is typically held 44 days after birth, signaling the end of confinement (*pantang*) for the mother. A passage is read from the Quran, then the child's head is shaved and the clippings placed in a bowl of water. In some families, the accumulated hair will be weighed and an equivalent monetary donation will be made to the poor and needy. The hair is traditionally buried in the yard. A banquet is held afterwards to celebrate this rite of passage.^{101, 102, 103}

Female circumcision, or female genital mutilation, was declared mandatory in 2009 by Malaysia's highest Islamic body.^{104, 105} The procedure is performed before a girl reaches the age of two but today, most procedures are done in

the hospital before the child comes home.^{106, 107} For boys, the procedure generally occurs between the ages of five and twelve.¹⁰⁸ On the day before the procedure, the boy's hair is trimmed and he wears traditional Malay clothes, which are often made of silk. In some villages, the child is paraded through the village on a special dais or pelamin.¹⁰⁹ Some circumcisions are still carried out by traditional healers, but many circumcisions are now performed in clinics or hospitals with only the father present.^{110, 111} Following the event, the family holds a feast with friends and family marking the boy's coming of age.¹¹²



Malay boy
© Yun Huang Yong

Naming Conventions

Most Malay given names are derived from Arabic.¹¹³ Malays do not have surnames in the same tradition as in the West. Last names are commonly formed by adding *bin* (for men) or *binti* (for women) before a father's given name.^{114, 115} Ahmad, the son of Mokhzani would be known as Ahmad bin Mokhzani. His sister, Noor, would be Noor binti Mokhzani. Bin and binti can be omitted, particularly in informal situations. Women do not take their husband's name after marriage.¹¹⁶ Instead, the title *puan* is commonly added before the name. Puan Bahiyah binti Aziz, for instance, indicates the person is a married female (*puan*) whose first name is Bahiyah,

daughter of Aziz.¹¹⁷

It is important to keep in mind when addressing a Malay that some Arabic names do not count as first names, but are part of double names, such as Abdul and Mohammad for boys or Nur and Siti for girls. Thus, Abdul Rahman bin Osman would be addressed as Abdul Rahman, not Abdul or Rahman.¹¹⁸

Those who have completed a pilgrimage (*haji*) to Mecca add *haji* or *hajjah* as a prefix in formal settings.¹¹⁹ Thus, after the *haji* Mohammad Yusoff becomes Haji Mohammad Yusof.

Malay parents are moving away from traditional names and instead creating Malay variations of names familiar throughout most of the world. Daniel, Mikhail, and Jayden have become popular names for boys and Alicia, Qaseh, Hannah, and Iris for girls.¹²⁰ Siblings rarely refer to each other by name, instead it is by birth order.¹²¹

Endnotes

- 1 Sangeeta Dhami and Aziz Sheikh, "The Muslim Family," *Western Journal of Medicine* 173, no. 5 (November 2000), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1071164/>
- 2 Family.jrank, "Malaysia—Marriage and Family Formation Patterns," 2014, <http://family.jrank.org/pages/1090/Malaysia.html>
- 3 Zarinah Mahari, "Demographic Transition in Malaysia: The Changing Roles of Women," (paper, 15th Conference of Commonwealth Statisticians, New Delhi, India, 7-10 February 2011), 19, http://www.cwsc2011.gov.in/papers/demographic_transitions/Paper_1.pdf
- 4 Mohd Taib Dora and Noor Baiduri Abd Halim, "Issues and Factors of Problematic Families in Malaysia," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 1, no. 4 (April 2011): 155, http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol._1_No._4;_April_2011/20.pdf
- 5 Susan Elliott and Alison Gray, "Family Structures," (report for the New Zealand Immigration Service, July 2000), 13-14, <http://www.dol.govt.nz/research/migration/pdfs/FamilyStructures.pdf>
- 6 Shannon Whittier, "Malay Kinship," n.d., <http://people.stu.ca/~belyea/2007/intersession/rite1/malays-1.htm>
- 7 Susan Elliott and Alison Gray, "Family Structures," (report for the New Zealand Immigration Service, July 2000), 13-14, <http://www.dol.govt.nz/research/migration/pdfs/FamilyStructures.pdf>
- 8 Peter Bellwood, *Prehistory of the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago*, 3rd ed. (Canberra, Australia: Australian National University Press, 2007), 144.
- 9 Susan Elliott and Alison Gray, "Family Structures," (report for the New Zealand Immigration Service, July 2000), 14, <http://www.dol.govt.nz/research/migration/pdfs/FamilyStructures.pdf>
- 10 Charles Hirschman and Bussarawan Teerawichitchainan, "Ethnicity and Marital Disruption in Southeast Asia: A Comparative Study of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand," (paper presented at the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population Regional Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, 2002), 14-15, <http://csde.washington.edu/~glynn/c/Ethnicity.pdf>
- 11 "High Divorce Rate Plagues Malaysia," OnIslam, 27 May 2011, <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/asia-pacific/452421-high-divorce-rate-plagues-malaysia.html>
- 12 Susan Elliott and Alison Gray, "Family Structures," (report for the New Zealand Immigration Service, July 2000), 14, <http://www.dol.govt.nz/research/migration/pdfs/FamilyStructures.pdf>
- 13 "High Divorce Rate Plagues Malaysia," OnIslam, 27 May 2011, <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/asia-pacific/452421-high-divorce-rate-plagues-malaysia.html>
- 14 Susan Elliott and Alison Gray, "Family Structures," (report for the New Zealand Immigration Service, July 2000), 14, <http://www.dol.govt.nz/research/migration/pdfs/FamilyStructures.pdf>
- 15 Charles Hirschman and Bussarawan Teerawichitchainan, "Ethnicity and Marital Disruption in Southeast Asia: A Comparative Study of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand," (paper presented at the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population Regional Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, 2002), 6-8, <http://csde.washington.edu/~glynn/c/Ethnicity.pdf>
- 16 "High Divorce Rate Plagues Malaysia," OnIslam, 27 May 2011, <http://www.onislam.net/english/news/asia-pacific/452421-high-divorce-rate-plagues-malaysia.html>
- 17 Shala Koshy, "The Family Must Come First," *The Star Online*, 11 April 2010, <http://www.thestar.com.my/story.aspx/?sec=focus&file=%2f2010%2f4%2f11%2ffocus%2f6034704>
- 18 National Population and Family Development Board, "National Family Policy," 2014, http://www.lppkn.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=73&Itemid=645&lang=en
- 19 Family.jrank, "Malaysia—Marriage and Family Formation Patterns," 2014, <http://family.jrank.org/pages/1090/Malaysia.html>
- 20 Zarinah Mahari, "Demographic Transition in Malaysia:

- The Changing Roles of Women,” (paper, 15th Conference of Commonwealth Statisticians, New Delhi, India, 7-10 February 2011), 19, http://www.cwsc2011.gov.in/papers/demographic_transitions/Paper_1.pdf
- 21 Zarinah Mahari, “Demographic Transition in Malaysia: The Changing Roles of Women,” (paper, 15th Conference of Commonwealth Statisticians, New Delhi, India, 7-10 February 2011), 9, http://www.cwsc2011.gov.in/papers/demographic_transitions/Paper_1.pdf
- 22 Zarinah Mahari, “Demographic Transition in Malaysia: The Changing Roles of Women,” (paper, 15th Conference of Commonwealth Statisticians, New Delhi, India, 7-10 February 2011), 13-18, http://www.cwsc2011.gov.in/papers/demographic_transitions/Paper_1.pdf
- 23 Rozumah Baharudin et al., “Family Processes as Predictors of Antisocial Behaviors among Adolescents from Urban, Single-Mother Malay Families in Malaysia,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 42, no. 4 (2011), <http://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-263364653/family-processes-as-predictors-of-antisocial-behaviors>
- 24 Yaacob Harun, “Malay Family Values,” Malay Family System blogspot, 3 September 2009, <http://malayfamilysystem.blogspot.com/2009/09/malay-family-values.html>
- 25 Rozumah Baharudin et al., “Family Processes as Predictors of Antisocial Behaviors among Adolescents from Urban, Single-Mother Malay Families in Malaysia,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 42, no. 4 (2011), <http://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-263364653/family-processes-as-predictors-of-antisocial-behaviors>
- 26 Yaacob Harun, “Malay Family Values,” Malay Family System blogspot, 3 September 2009, <http://malayfamilysystem.blogspot.com/2009/09/malay-family-values.html>
- 27 Social Institutions and Gender Index, “Malaysia,” 2012, <http://genderindex.org/country/malaysia>
- 28 Nurui Islam Hasib, “75% Uni Students Women in Malaysia,” *bdnews24*, 28 May 2013, <http://bdnews24.com/campus/2013/05/28/75-uni-students-women-in-malaysia>
- 29 Social Institutions and Gender Index, “Malaysia,” 2012, <http://genderindex.org/country/malaysia>
- 30 Social Institutions and Gender Index, “Malaysia: Restricted Civil Liberties,” 2012, <http://genderindex.org/country/malaysia>
- 31 Social Institutions and Gender Index, “Malaysia: Background,” 2012, <http://genderindex.org/country/malaysia>
- 32 Ministry of Women and Family Development, “Chapter 1: Introduction,” in *The Progress of Malaysian Women Since Independence 1957-2000* (report, September 2003), 26, <http://www.undp.org.my/uploads../ProgressOfMalaysianWomen.pdf>
- 33 Ministry of Women and Family Development, “Chapter 1: Introduction,” in *The Progress of Malaysian Women Since Independence 1957-2000* (report, September 2003), 26, <http://www.undp.org.my/uploads../ProgressOfMalaysianWomen.pdf>
- 34 Ministry of Women and Family Development, “Chapter 3: Women and the Economy,” in *The Progress of Malaysian Women Since Independence 1957-2000* (report, September 2003), 54-67, <http://www.undp.org.my/uploads../ProgressOfMalaysianWomen.pdf>
- 35 Social Institutions and Gender Index, “Malaysia: Restricted Civil Liberties,” 2012, <http://genderindex.org/country/malaysia>
- 36 Ministry of Women and Family Development, “Chapter 5: Women in Decision Making and Power Sharing,” in *The Progress of Malaysian Women Since Independence 1957-2000* (report, September 2003), 93-102, <http://www.undp.org.my/uploads../ProgressOfMalaysianWomen.pdf>
- 37 Liz Gooch, “Halls of Power Narrow for Malaysian Women,” *New York Times*, 28 August 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/29/world/asia/29iht-malay29.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- 38 Lynda Lim, “Gender Think Piece: Malaysian Women’s Entry into Politics,” (paper, Centre for Public Policy Studies, Malaysia, 6 May 2013), 1-3, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/29/world/asia/29iht-malay29.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- 39 Child Rights Coalition, Malaysia, “2: Overview of Key Issues,” in *Status Report on Children’s Rights in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Child Rights Coalition, December 2012), 5, http://www.unicef.org/malaysia/Report_on_Childrens_Rights_.pdf

- 40 Child Rights Coalition, Malaysia, “4: General Principles,” in *Status Report on Children’s Rights in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Child Rights Coalition, December 2012), 8, http://www.unicef.org/malaysia/Report_on_Childrens_Rights_.pdf
- 41 Child Rights Coalition, Malaysia, “12: Stateless Children,” in *Status Report on Children’s Rights in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Child Rights Coalition, December 2012), 23, http://www.unicef.org/malaysia/Report_on_Childrens_Rights_.pdf
- 42 Child Rights Coalition, Malaysia, “4: General Principles,” in *Status Report on Children’s Rights in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Child Rights Coalition, December 2012), 24, http://www.unicef.org/malaysia/Report_on_Childrens_Rights_.pdf
- 43 Child Rights Coalition, Malaysia, “5: Civil Rights and Freedoms,” in *Status Report on Children’s Rights in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Child Rights Coalition, December 2012), 10, http://www.unicef.org/malaysia/Report_on_Childrens_Rights_.pdf
- 44 Child Rights Coalition, Malaysia, “5: Civil Rights and Freedoms,” in *Status Report on Children’s Rights in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Child Rights Coalition, December 2012), 10, http://www.unicef.org/malaysia/Report_on_Childrens_Rights_.pdf
- 45 Child Rights Coalition, Malaysia, “4: General Principles,” in *Status Report on Children’s Rights in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Child Rights Coalition, December 2012), 9, http://www.unicef.org/malaysia/Report_on_Childrens_Rights_.pdf
- 46 Child Rights Coalition, Malaysia, “17: Children in Conflict with the Law,” in *Status Report on Children’s Rights in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Child Rights Coalition, December 2012), 27, http://www.unicef.org/malaysia/Report_on_Childrens_Rights_.pdf
- 47 Child Rights Coalition, Malaysia, “6: Family Support and Alternative Care,” in *Status Report on Children’s Rights in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Child Rights Coalition, December 2012), 12, http://www.unicef.org/malaysia/Report_on_Childrens_Rights_.pdf
- 48 Social Welfare Department, Government of Malaysia, “National Policy for the Elderly,” 2 November 2009, <http://www.kpwkm.gov.my/documents/10156/576479be-3a70-4dc0-82dd-0ee30cc83ea8>
- 49 Wong Chay Nee, “Policy Response for the Aging in Malaysia,” (presentation, Malaysian Institute of Economic, n.d.) http://www.mof.go.jp/pri/research/seminar/20060601/s2_02.pdf
- 50 Yaacob Harun, “Malay Family Values,” Malay Family System blogspot, 3 September 2009, <http://malayfamilysystem.blogspot.com/2009/09/malay-family-values.html>
- 51 Rabieyah Mat and Hajar Md. Taha, “Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Elderly in Malaysia,” (paper, 21st Population Census Conference, Kyoto, Japan, 19-21 November 2003), 13, <http://www.ancsdaap.org/cencon2003/Papers/Malaysia/Malaysia.pdf>
- 52 Mohd Yusof Yusnani, “Accommodating the Malaysian Elderly: The Cultural Precursors,” *Ageing International* 31, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 185, <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF02915228#page-2>
- 53 Richard Jackson, “Attitudes toward the Role of the Family, the Individual, and the State in Providing Retirement Income: Survey Evidence from Emerging East Asia,” (paper, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 6 January 2013), 7, http://www.imf.org/external/np/seminars/eng/2013/oapfad/pdf/jackson_ppr.pdf
- 54 Richard Jackson, “Attitudes toward the Role of the Family, the Individual, and the State in Providing Retirement Income: Survey Evidence from Emerging East Asia,” (paper, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 6 January 2013), 11, http://www.imf.org/external/np/seminars/eng/2013/oapfad/pdf/jackson_ppr.pdf
- 55 Richard Jackson, “Attitudes toward the Role of the Family, the Individual, and the State in Providing Retirement Income: Survey Evidence from Emerging East Asia,” (paper, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 6 January 2013), 12, http://www.imf.org/external/np/seminars/eng/2013/oapfad/pdf/jackson_ppr.pdf
- 56 Jariah Masud, Sharifah Azizah Haron, and Lucy Gikonyo, “Exploring Economic Status of the Elderly in Peninsular

- Malaysia Using Net Flow and Net Worth,” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 2, no. 17 (September 2012), 155, http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_2_No_17_September_2012/15.pdf
- 57 Department of Statistics Malaysia, “Table 2.1: Employed Population Aged 15-64 Years by Age Group, Sex, Occupation, Ethnic Group and State, Malaysia, 2010,” 16 January 2014, http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=363&Itemid=149&lang=en#9
- 58 Social Welfare Department, Government of Malaysia, “National Policy for the Elderly,” 2 November 2009, <http://www.kpwm.gov.my/documents/10156/576479be-3a70-4dc0-82dd-0ee30cc83ea8>
- 59 wcc Penang, “Marriage (Syariah Law),” n.d., <http://www.jpn.gov.my/en/soalanlazim/marriage-divorce>
- 60 Department of Statistics Malaysia, “Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristic Report 2010,” n.d., http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/index.php?option=com_content&id=1215
- 61 wcc Penang, “Marriage (Syariah Law),” n.d., <http://www.jpn.gov.my/en/soalanlazim/marriage-divorce>
- 62 Nomy Nozwir, “For Young Malay Couples, an Increasingly High Price to Getting Wed,” *The Malaysian Insider*, 16 September 2012, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/print/malaysia/for-young-malay-couples-an-increasingly-high-price-to-getting-wed>
- 63 Boo Su-Lyn, “Till Debt Do Us Part,” *The Malay Mail Online*, 24 December 2013, <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/till-debt-do-us-part>
- 64 wcc Penang, “Marriage (Syariah Law),” n.d., <http://www.jpn.gov.my/en/soalanlazim/marriage-divorce>
- 65 Law School, Emory University, “Malaysia,” n.d., <http://www.law.emory.edu/ifl/legal/malaysia.htm>
- 66 wcc Penang, “Divorce (Syariah Law), (paper, n.d.),” <http://www.wccpenang.org/files/docs/syariah-divorce.pdf>
- 67 Samuel Chan Hsin Chlen, “Divorce in Malaysia,” (paper, seminar Kaunseling Keluarga, 2008), 23, http://eprints.utm.my/6058/1/SamuelChanHsinChlen2008_DivorceInMalaysia.pdf
- 68 Sharon Ling, “Authorities Alarmed by High Rate of Divorce Cases among Muslims,” *The Star Online*, 24 September 2013, <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Community/2013/09/24/Authorities-alarmed-by-high-rate-of-divorce-cases-among-Muslims.aspx/>
- 69 National Registration Department of Malaysia, Ministry of Home Affairs, “Marriage and Divorce,” 2013, <http://www.jpn.gov.my/en/soalanlazim/marriage-divorce>
- 70 wcc Penang, “Divorce (Syariah Law), (paper, n.d.),” <http://www.wccpenang.org/files/docs/syariah-divorce.pdf>
- 71 BBC News, “Malaysia Permits Text Message Divorce,” 27 July 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3100143.stm>
- 72 wcc Penang, “Divorce (Syariah Law), (paper, n.d.),” <http://www.wccpenang.org/files/docs/syariah-divorce.pdf>
- 73 wcc Penang, “Divorce (Syariah Law), (paper, n.d.),” <http://www.wccpenang.org/files/docs/syariah-divorce.pdf>
- 74 wcc Penang, “Divorce (Syariah Law), (paper, n.d.),” <http://www.wccpenang.org/files/docs/syariah-divorce.pdf>
- 75 Law School, Emory University, “Malaysia,” n.d., <http://www.law.emory.edu/ifl/legal/malaysia.htm>
- 76 Yaacob Harun, “Malay Family Values,” *Malay Family System blogspot*, 3 September 2009, <http://malayfamilysystem.blogspot.com/2009/09/malay-family-values.html>
- 77 Social Institutions and Gender Index, “Malaysia: Son Bias,” 2012, <http://genderindex.org/country/malaysia>
- 78 Fatemeh Najafi et al., “Emergency Contraception: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Among Married Malay Women Staff at a Public University in Malaysia,” *Southeast Asian Journal of Tropical Medicine and Public Health* 43, no. 6 (November 2012):1513, <http://www.tm.mahidol.ac.th/seameo/2012-43-6-full/24-5592-4.pdf>
- 79 Mohd Nazri Shafei, Mohd Shaharudin Shah, and Tengku Alina Tengku Ismail, “Knowledge and Attitude towards Family Planning Practice and Prevalence of Short Birth Spacing among Residents of Suburban Area in Terengganu, Malaysia,” *Journal of Community Medicine, Health, and Education* 2 (28

- October 2012), <http://www.omicsonline.org/2161-0711/2161-0711-2-180.php?%20aid=9586>
- 80 Fatemeh S.A. Najafi, “Barriers to Modern Contraceptive Practices among Selected Married Women in a Public University in Malaysia,” *Global Journal of Health Science* 3, no 2 (October 2011): 52-53, <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/gjhs/article/viewFile/9493/8706>
- 81 Malay Wedding Services, “What Everybody Ought to Know about Malay Weddings,” 2013, <http://malayweddingservices.com/malay-wedding/>
- 82 Pahang-Delights, “Akad Nikah (Traditional Malay Wedding Vows),” 2014, <http://www.pahang-delights.com/akad-nikah.html>
- 83 Malay Wedding Services, “What Everybody Ought to Know about Malay Weddings,” 2013, <http://malayweddingservices.com/malay-wedding/>
- 84 Malay Wedding Services, “What Everybody Ought to Know about Malay Weddings,” 2013, <http://malayweddingservices.com/malay-wedding/>
- 85 Malay Culture, “The Malay Wedding,” 13 August 2012, <http://www.malayculture.com.my/the-malay-wedding/>
- 86 Malay Wedding Services, “What Everybody Ought to Know about Malay Weddings,” 2013, <http://malayweddingservices.com/malay-wedding/>
- 87 Staffspastrack, “Islamic Funerals,” n.d., <http://www.staffspastrack.org.uk/exhibit/ilm/Mourining%20and%20Remembrance/Types%20of%20funerals/Islamic%20Funerals.htm>
- 88 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 3: Ways of Seeing—They and You,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 48.
- 89 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 3: Ways of Seeing—They and You,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 48.
- 90 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 3: Ways of Seeing—They and You,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 48.
- 91 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 3: Ways of Seeing—They and You,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 48-49.
- 92 Bahasa-Malaysia-simple-fun, “Funeral of a Malay Family,” n.d., <http://www.bahasa-malaysia-simple-fun.com/funeral.html>
- 93 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 3: Ways of Seeing—They and You,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 49.
- 94 Bahasa-Malaysia-simple-fun, “Funeral of a Malay Family,” n.d., <http://www.bahasa-malaysia-simple-fun.com/funeral.html>
- 95 Penang Heritage City, “Malay Customs,” n.d., <http://www.penangheritagecity.com/malay-customs.html>
- 96 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 3: Ways of Seeing—They and You,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 49.
- 97 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 3: Ways of Seeing—They and You,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 49.
- 98 Mior Azhar, “Naik Buai Ceremony,” 20 August 2008, <http://azharazian.blogspot.com/2008/08/naik-buai-ceremony.html>
- 99 Sueniedamalaysiaculture blog, “Malaysian Culture,” 6 February 2011, <http://sueniedamalaysianculture.blogspot.com/>
- 100 Heidi Munan, “Chapter 3: Ways of Seeing—They and You,” in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 38.
- 101 Babycenter, “Baby Traditions: Cukur Jambul,” February 2013, <http://www.babycenter.com.my/a1026575/baby-traditions-cukur-jambul>
- 102 Penang Heritage City, “Malay Customs,” n.d., <http://www.penangheritagecity.com/malay-customs.html>
- 103 Mior Azhar, “Naik Buai Ceremony,” 20 August 2008, <http://azharazian.blogspot.com/2008/08/naik-buai-ceremony.html>
- 104 “Female Circumcision Widely Practiced in Malaysia,” YouTube video 5:11, TV report, Asia Calling, posted by asiacallingjkt, 3 June 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpVwOb7A2Ms>

- 105 ABC, "Malaysia Storm Over Female Circumcision," 7 December 2012, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-12-07/an-malaysia-debate-over-female-circumcision/4416298>
- 106 "Female Circumcision Widely Practiced in Malaysia," YouTube video 5:11, TV report, Asia Calling, posted by asiacallingjkt, 3 June 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpVwOb7A2Ms>
- 107 Penang Heritage City, "Malay Customs," n.d., <http://www.penangheritagecity.com/malay-customs.html>
- 108 Azhar73, "Circumcision in Malaysia," 27 November 2011, <http://www.photoblog.com/azhar73/2011/11/27/circumcision-in-malaysia.html>
- 109 Malay Culture, "Malay Traditional Ceremonies," 13 August 2012, <http://www.malayculture.com.my/malay-traditional-ceremonies/>
- 110 "Childhood: Coming of Age Rituals," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality and Health*, Vol. 3, Suad Joseph and Afsāna Jaḡmābādī, eds. (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2006), 68.
- 111 A. K. Rashid, Swee-Ping The, and K.A. Narayan, "Traditional Male Circumcision in a Rural Community in Kedah, Malaysia," *International e-Journal of Science, Medicine and Education* 3, no.2 (2009): 19, http://web.imu.edu.my/ejournal/approved/eJournal_3.2_19-23.pdf
- 112 "Childhood: Coming of Age Rituals," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality and Health*, Vol. 3, Suad Joseph and Afsāna Jaḡmābādī, eds. (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2006), 68.
- 113 Heidi Munan, "Chapter 3: Ways of Seeing—They and You," in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 26.
- 114 Kwintessential, "Malaysia," 2014, <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/malaysia.html>
- 115 Heidi Munan, "Chapter 3: Ways of Seeing—They and You," in *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 26-27.
- 116 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, "FAQS," 2014, http://www.kln.gov.my/web/nzl_wellington/faqs
- 117 Some Southeast Asian Junk, "Naming Conventions; Or, Why TP's Bibliography Will Be Confusing," 15 June 2005, http://indolaysia.typepad.com/some_southeast_asian_junk/2005/06/naming_conventi.html
- 118 Some Southeast Asian Junk, "Naming Conventions; Or, Why TP's Bibliography Will Be Confusing," 15 June 2005, http://indolaysia.typepad.com/some_southeast_asian_junk/2005/06/naming_conventi.html
- 119 Language and Learning Unit, University of South Australia, "What Do I Call You? An Introduction to Chinese, Malay and Hindu Names," 2 February 2009, <http://w3.unisa.edu.au/internationalstudentsupport/people/callyou.asp>
- 120 Baby Center Malaysia, "Top Malaysian Baby Names 2012," 2012, <http://www.babycenter.com.my/a25004585/malaysian-baby-names-2012/>
- 121 Radiah Yousoff, "Translating Kinship Terms to Malay," *Translation Journal* 11, no. 3 (2007), <http://www.bokorlang.com/journal/41malay.htm>

Overview: Chapter 6 Assessment

1. The most common family structure among the Malay is the extended family.

FALSE

Malaysia has transitioned from being an agrarian to an urbanized industrial nation and families became smaller. The extended family gave way to the nuclear family, which is now the most common family type in the country.

2. The average Malay household has approximately 4 members.

TRUE

Household size has dropped to approximately 4 persons, although rural households tend to be slightly larger with around 5 members.

3. The Malaysian constitution guarantees equality between the sexes.

FALSE

The federal constitution does not explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex.

4. A man is required to pay a dowry to his wife.

TRUE

Typically there are two kinds of wedding dowries. The compulsory *mas kahwin* is fixed by state and local religious departments and is generally low. The *hantaran* is technically optional but rarely avoidable.

5. Only men can initiate a divorce in Malaysia.

FALSE

Both men and women have the right to initiate a divorce. However, women can only obtain a judicial divorce, while a man may divorce his wife by publicly renouncing her three times.

Malay Cultural Orientation: Final Assessment

1. Nearly a quarter of the population of Malaysia is Chinese.
True or False?
2. The government censors internet sites throughout Malaysia.
True or False?
3. Agriculture is the largest contributor to GDP and the Malaysian economy.
True or False?
4. More than half of the seats in the Senate are appointed by the sultan.
True or False?
5. The nation's leading port is George Town.
True or False?
6. The Quran should never be burned.
True or False?
7. Members of the Shi'a sect often face restrictions on the practice of their religion.
True or False?
8. Only Islamic holidays are officially observed in Malaysia.
True or False?
9. Malays are, by definition, Muslims.
True or False?
10. There is no gender segregation in Malaysia.
True or False?
11. Many Malay were Buddhists before Islam was introduced to the region.
True or False?

12. A white skullcap means that a man has made the hajj.
True or False?
13. To convey respect, titles should generally be used with last names.
True or False?
14. Malaysians generally avoid direct eye-contact when interacting with others.
True or False?
15. Meat served by Malays must conform to halal standards.
True or False?
16. ATMs are readily available throughout Malaysia.
True or False?
17. Taxis hailed on the street can be less safe than those arranged over the phone.
True or False?
18. Passengers on trains and buses must ride in gender segregated coaches.
True or False?
19. Malays are generous toward beggars.
True or False?
20. Ethnic Malays have the lowest rates of urban poverty among Malaysia's three main ethnic groups.
True or False?
21. Agriculture is a major economic sector accounting for approximately one-third of GDP.
True or False?
22. The smallest administrative unit in rural governance is the kampong.
True or False?

23. Drivers are required to stop at checkpoints manned by plainclothes police.
True or False?
24. Most farmers in Malaysia are at least 50 years old.
True or False?
25. River travel is rarely used as a means of transporting people in rural Malaysia.
True or False?
26. The Malay kinship system is patrilineal.
True or False?
27. The fastest growing household type is the female single-parent household.
True or False?
28. Most Malays believe it is their responsibility to care and provide for elderly family members.
True or False?
29. The official mourning period following the death of a family member is 40 days.
True or False?
30. Malays take their father's surnames as their own.
True or False?

Malay Cultural Orientation: Further Reading

- Abidin, MohdAsri Zainful. *Islam in Malaysia: Perceptions and Facts*. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Matahari Books, 2010.
- Alayoubi, Imad. "Malaysian Bohom Practitioners a Dying Breed." *OnIslam.net*, 14 January 2014, <http://www.onislam.net/english/health-and-science/science/429144-malaysian-bomoh-practitioners-a-dying-breed.html>
- Chang, Florence. "End of Days for Bumiputra Laws?" *Asia Today International*, 29 April, 2013. <http://asiatoday.com.au/content/end-days-bumiputra-laws>
- Department of Tourism, Government of Malaysia. "Traditional Attire," n.d. <http://www.tourism.gov.my/en/Master/Web-Page/About-Malaysia/Culture-n-Heritage/Traditional-Attire>
- Husin, Wan Norhasnian Wan. "Budi-Islam: It's Role in the Construction of Malay Identity in Malaysia." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 1, no. 12 (September 2011). http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_1_No_12_September_2011/19.pdf
- Kumar, Pranav. "Malaysia: Majority Supremacy and Ethnic Tensions." *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*. 2014. <http://www.ipcs.org/special-report/southeast-asia/malaysia-majority-supremacy-and-ethnic-tensions-134.html>
- Kwintessential. "Malaysia-Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette." 2014. <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/malaysia.html>
- Mahari, Zarinah. "Demographic Transition in Malaysia: The Changing Roles of Women." Paper, 15th Conference of Commonwealth Statisticians, New Delhi, India, 7-10 February 2011. http://www.cwsc2011.gov.in/papers/demographic_transitions/Paper_1.pdf
- Milner, Anthony. *The Malays*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008.
- Ministry of Women and Family Development. *The Progress of Malaysian Women since Independence 1957-2000*. Report, September 2003. <http://www.undp.org.my/uploads../ProgressOfMalaysianWomen.pdf>
- Munan, Heidi. *Culture Shock! Malaysia: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette*. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008.

- “Taboos in Malay Culture.” YouTube Video, 11:20. Posted by Tasha Millatina, 9 December 2013. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAYI1ISIKew>
- “The Malaysian Culture.” YouTube Video, 8:34. Documentary. Posted by Blaquarium Productions, 15 August 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHQNLN_tK1k
- Yusof, Ghulam-Sarwar. *Issues in Traditional Malaysian Culture*. Singapore: Trafford Publishing, 2013.