

# Riskline / Destination Report

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# MALAYSIA

## Overall risk level

<b>Low</b> Take normal safety precautions	<b>Moderate</b> Take normal safety precautions	<b>Medium</b> Exercise caution	<b>High</b> Reconsider travel	<b>Extreme</b> Defer non-essential travel
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The Overall Risk Level will be determined by the higher of the Security Risk Level and Covid-19 Risk Level.

## Security risk level

<b>Low</b> Take normal safety precautions	<b>Moderate</b> Take normal safety precautions	<b>Medium</b> Exercise caution	<b>High</b> Reconsider travel	<b>Extreme</b> Defer non-essential travel
Safe, with few security risks	Generally safe, with some predictable security risks	Not completely safe, but typically presents predictable security risks	Can be dangerous and may present unexpected security risks	Extremely dangerous and presents unpredictable security risks
Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Chaotic; travel impossible

## Covid-19 risk level

<b>Low</b> Take normal safety precautions	<b>Moderate</b> Take normal safety precautions	<b>Medium</b> Exercise caution	<b>High</b> Reconsider travel	<b>Extreme</b> Defer non-essential travel
Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to <b>Low Risk</b> locations, which have limited or no restrictions on international travel and domestic activities.	Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to <b>Moderate Risk</b> locations, which have few restrictions on international travel and limited or no restrictions on domestic activities.	Unvaccinated travellers should exercise caution when travelling to <b>Medium Risk</b> locations, and vaccinated travellers should take normal precautions. These locations may have some restrictions on international travel, but few restrictions on domestic activities.	Unvaccinated travellers should reconsider their need to travel to <b>High Risk</b> locations, and vaccinated travellers should exercise caution. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and partially restricted domestic activities.	Unvaccinated travellers should defer non-essential travel to <b>Extreme Risk</b> locations, and vaccinated travellers should reconsider their travel. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and domestic activities.

# Overview

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## Upcoming Events

01 January 2024 - 02 January 2024

- **Moderate risk:** Officials to introduce Malaysian Digital Arrival Card for international arrivals from 1 January 2024

Effective from 1 January 2024, international arrivals will be obliged to submit the Malaysian Digital Arrival Card (MDAC) before or upon arrival at all ports of entry. Those transiting through Singapore without seeking immigration clearance, Malaysian permanent residents and holders of the Malaysia Automated Clearance System (MACS) will be exempt.

# Travel Advisories

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## ● Moderate risk: Border regions with Thailand

Take normal safety precautions for travel to areas near the **international border with Thailand in Perlis, Kedah, Perak and Kelantan states** in the near-term due to insurgent activities.

Insurgent activities have increased in the ethnically Malay provinces of southern Thailand in the past decade. Although the insurgency has remained localised and is unlikely to spill over into wider Malaysia, many residents of Thailand's Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Songkhla provinces have both Thai and Malaysian nationalities, making it easy for terrorist elements to pass back and forth over the border, and difficult for security forces to apprehend those responsible for attacks. In addition, Thai authorities have been reluctant to strengthen border controls for fear of disrupting the tourism industry upon which it relies so heavily.

Register itineraries with consular authorities for travel to areas near the **international border between Malaysia and Thailand in Perlis, Kedah, Perak and Kelantan states**. While visitors to Malaysia have not been specifically targeted by insurgents in Thailand, travellers face the risk of incidental harm when clashes erupt in the area without warning. Liaise with local authorities and consider hiring an experienced local guide who is familiar with the territory and aware of what areas should be avoided. Track local media for situational updates.

## ● **Medium risk:** Militant activities in the coastal region of eastern Sabah

Exercise caution for travel to the coastal region of **eastern Sabah** and outlying islands until further notice because of militant activity and the risk of kidnapping.

**Eastern Sabah's coastline** is only a 45-minute speedboat ride from the Philippines' Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and armed groups, including members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), have been known to enter **Sabah** to stage kidnappings of foreign businessmen and tourists. The threat is deemed highest between the towns of **Sandakan** and **Tawau** as well as on the resort islands of **Selingan, Lankayan, Mabul, Pom Pom, Kapalai, Ligitan** and **Mataking**. Private boats travelling to and from offshore islands and dive sites are also possible targets. At least five Indonesians were abducted by a suspected kidnap-for-ransom group linked to Abu Sayyaf from waters between **Tambisan Island** and **Kuala Meruap, Lahad Datu, Sabah state**, late on 16 January 2020. Areas of **eastern Sabah** are covered by the Esszone (Eastern Sabah Security Zone) due to the heightened security measures in place; a sea curfew for waters off the **Sandakan, Kinabatangan, Lahad Datu, Kunak, Semporna** and **Beluran** districts of the Esszone is in force daily from 18:00-06:00 local time due to the threat of further possible kidnappings by militant groups.

Register itineraries with consular services when travelling to **eastern Sabah**, including the outlying **Mataking, Sipadan, Kapalai, Pandanan** and **Mabul** islands, dive sites and associated tourist facilities; follow all curfew directives. Remain vigilant at all times, particularly in the vicinity of high-value tourist and energy infrastructure targets, including ports. Avoid travel on foot or at night; keep doors and windows locked when moving in vehicles. Vary daily travel routes and times. Do not resist in the event of kidnapping as assailants may be armed. Track local media for situational updates.

# Summary

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## Overall ● Moderate Risk

Malaysia is a **Moderate Risk** destination: take normal safety precautions.

## Security ● Moderate Risk

Moderate Risk locations are generally safe, with some predictable security risks. Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays.

## Covid ● Low Risk

Authorities have eased both international travel and domestic restrictions. The majority of the country's adult population has been fully vaccinated. Authorities lifted all COVID-19 entry requirements for international travellers. Healthcare workers and people who tested positive for COVID-19 must continue to wear facemasks when in public. From around mid-December, people who work at immigration counters and offices must wear facemasks; the public is urged to wear facemasks when at immigration.

## Political Instability ● Medium Risk

Periods of political turbulence and realignment in recent years have led to high volatility in Malaysia's political landscape. The November 2022 general election resulted in a political stalemate that lasted for over four days as none of the rival parties could achieve a simple majority and then refused to form an alliance. The multi-ethnic, reformist Pakatan Harapan (PH) coalition was then declared the winner by the king, replacing the longest-ruling government of the right-wing Barisan Nasional coalition. Divisive ethnic tensions between the Malay and minority Chinese and Indian communities, coupled with rising Islamic fundamentalism, present significant challenges to political stability.

## Conflict ● Moderate Risk

Malaysia is not engaged in any foreign conflicts. However, its relationships with Brunei, China, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand, have been strained before due to unresolved land and maritime disputes especially over the **Ambalat sea block** areas in the **Celebes Sea** off the east coast of **Sabah state** and the **Spratly Islands**.

However, they have worked together to reduce piracy in the area. Malaysia, due to its membership in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), has historically sought to resolve disputes via diplomatic means. Therefore, while tensions can surface, open conflict is unlikely.

## Terrorism ● Moderate Risk

Malaysia's geographical proximity to countries with entrenched Islamist insurgencies means that terror attacks are possible; this was seen in June 2016 when a grenade attack by an Islamic State-inspired Gagak Hitam cell at a nightclub in **Puchong, Selangor**, caused several injuries. Occasionally, clashes between security forces and Philippine-based Abu Sayyaf militants are reported in **Sabah state**. However, Malaysia's counter-terrorism agencies remain capable and there have been no large attacks in the country. There is some risk of attacks along the **Malaysia-Thailand border** due to the Islamist insurgency in Thailand's south, but incidents have not spilled into Malaysia in recent years.

## Unrest ● Moderate Risk

An increasingly vocal opposition and a growing civil society have generated some large-scale protests in **Kuala Lumpur** in recent years, with occasional outbursts of localised unrest. However, most demonstrations remain peaceful. Ethnic tensions between non-Malay/non-Muslim and Muslim/Malay populations remain present across the country, but this has not generated any widespread ethnic unrest in recent years due to strong policing. While localised unrest cannot be ruled out, authorities are likely to deploy harsh measures such as tear gas and water cannons in order to quell them quickly.

## Crime ● Medium Risk

Petty crimes and theft are the most common crimes affecting foreign nationals. Most crime occurs in urban and tourist areas, particularly in **Greater Kuala Lumpur** and **Johor Bahru**. Credit card, fraud and online scams, and vehicle theft are also present. While violent crimes such as robberies and sexual assault do occur, they do not usually target foreign visitors. There is, however, a kidnapping threat to foreign nationals and piracy along coastal areas of eastern **Sabah** state.

## Natural and Environmental ● Moderate Risk

The country is affected by seasonal monsoon storms between October and February in the **northeastern states**, and between April and October in the **southwestern states**. These may cause heavy flooding and landslides. Earthquakes can happen but are rare. Emergency services in Malaysia are generally well equipped and efficient in dealing with natural disasters.

## Local Travel ● Moderate Risk

Malaysia has well-developed travel and road infrastructure. Living standards are good but motorbike accidents are common, as motorcyclists weave in and out of busy, fast-moving traffic. Public transport options such as trains, buses and taxis are inexpensive, safe and reliable. Outside urban centres, bus travel can be hazardous due to poor road conditions, particularly in mountainous areas. Ferries are available for travel to East Malaysia but are weather-dependent and susceptible to accidents.

## Health and Medical ● Moderate Risk

Medical facilities in Malaysia are generally adequate, with good and affordable care of international standards available in **Kuala Lumpur** and other major cities. However, modern health care in rural areas is limited. Medical tourism, especially for cosmetic surgery, is common. Emergency response is reliable in major cities but less so in rural areas.

# Political Overview : ● Medium Risk

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Malaysia is a federal constitutional elective monarchy. The monarch, known as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, is head of the state and elected for five-year terms by and from the hereditary rulers of nine of Malaysia's 13 states. Sultan Abdullah of Pahang is the head of state and executive power is vested in the Cabinet, led by the Prime Minister.

Following the dominance of the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition since independence, the Pakatan Harapan (PH) coalition led by Mahathir Mohamad emerged victorious in the 2018 general elections on the back of promises to implement sweeping institutional reforms and improve governance. The BN, led by former Prime Minister Najib Razak and his United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) party lost the election partly due to Najib's touted involvement in numerous corruption scandals. However, the country soon endured a political crisis, with two prime ministers stepping down before the completion of their terms between 2020 and 2022. Mahathir's government collapsed less than two years after it was elected to power due to political infighting, and he resigned in February 2020. His successor Muhyiddin Yassin resigned from the same post around a year later after the UNMO, the largest party in the government, withdrew its support. Yassin's deputy, Ismail Sabri Yaakob, was appointed prime minister on 20 August 2021 and served until late November 2022.

The 20 November election was a closely contested race between three political coalitions - the BN, PH and Perikatan Nasional (PN), a coalition made up of defectors from the UMNO in alliance with the Islamist party PAS. The PH coalition won 82 seats, but it was short of the 112 needed to form a majority government in the 222-seat Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives), resulting in a hung parliament; while the PN won 74 seats and the BN coalition got 30 seats. As none of the coalitions were able to agree to partner and form a coalition government given their varying political ideologies, Sultan Abdullah declared the PH coalition as the winner. Anwar Ibrahim, the leader of the coalition's People's Justice Party (PKR), is the current prime minister, who has formed a unity government along with the BN coalition and several other parties.

Ibrahim faces the critical challenge of maintaining party cohesion in order to sustain governance and improve long-term political stability, in spite of the conflicting ideologies of the various parties in the ruling coalition. For example, while the PKR is a



reformist party focused on including other ethnic minorities in governance, the BN-led UNMO is more conservative and seeks to promote the main Malay population and nationalism. Given frequently shifting political loyalties, further cabinet shuffles cannot be ruled out in the long run before the next elections. The new government also needs to direct its efforts into maintaining strong economic growth, which has only just rebounded after COVID-19, while also tackling inflation; economic growth in Malaysia was 3.1 percent in 2021 and around 8.7 percent in 2022.

Underlying ethnic tensions, particularly between Chinese and Indian migrants and the major Malay population in a divided Malaysian society also have the potential to affect long-term political stability. The ongoing discrimination against non-Malay migrants is perceived as hampering the country's development and raises the risk of future racial violence. It remains to be seen if the new government can stem decades of racial and religious intolerance fanned by previous administrations.

## Recent incidents

09 March 2023 - 10 March 2023

### ● **Moderate risk: Former Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin arrested over corruption charges**

Former Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin of the Malaysian United Indigenous Party has been arrested over corruption charges. Muhyiddin led the country for 17 months between March 2020 and August 2021.

## Conflict : ● Moderate Risk

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**Border Conflict:** Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, littoral states of the Strait of Malacca, are engaged in an ongoing maritime security dispute over military activities in the region. However, cooperation between the nations has proved highly successful in reducing piracy in the area, and disagreements are unlikely to derail the ongoing operations.

The most serious of these disputes exist with Indonesia over the **Ambalat sea block**, which includes the **Sipadan** and **Ligitan** islands that were formally awarded to Malaysia by an International Court of Justice ruling, as well as unresolved disputed maritime boundaries in the **Celebes Sea**, off the east coast of **Sabah state**. Confrontations occurred following the ruling; however, despite these incidents, both governments have pledged to resolve their outstanding territorial disputes through negotiations and diplomacy.

**South China Sea:** A major source of external conflict is the **South China Sea** dispute for the control of the **Spratly Islands**, claimed and controlled by Brunei, China, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. Tensions have escalated in recent years as China adopted an increasingly aggressive posture. The pace of China's land reclamation program and the decision to hold live-fire military drills alarmed other states, particularly Vietnam and the Philippines. China rejected a ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague over sovereignty rights in the region, which went against Beijing.

As do other claimant states, Malaysia does not recognise China's controversial 'Nine Dash Line' that Beijing uses to claim over 90 percent of the **South China Sea**. While Malaysia has not been as overt as Vietnam and the Philippines in responding to Beijing's increasingly aggressive posture, Malaysian officials still view China's encroachment seriously. Although the maritime disputes have currently no impact on travel, they are certain to remain a potential catalyst for international conflict in the region, and while the threat of full-scale armed conflict remains very limited, skirmishes and low-intensity conflict are possible.

**Strength of Military Forces:** The country maintains a relatively sophisticated military, with arms procurement driven by the country's strong economic growth over the past two decades. The Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) consist of the Malaysian Army, the Royal Malaysian Navy and the Royal Malaysian Air Force. The MAF have a total

manpower of 113,000 active personnel and over 51,000 reservists. The country's navy is the strongest in Southeast Asia. The MAF are heavily involved in regional efforts to combat piracy and smuggling in the Strait of Malacca.

# Terrorism

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**Terrorism:** Despite the absence of any major terrorist or insurgent group on Malaysian soil, the increased presence of IS-inspired radicalism and regular arrests of IS-linked militants indicate that a terror attack cannot be ruled out. Police confirmed that an IS-inspired Gagak Hitam cell was behind a grenade attack on a nightclub in **Puchong, Selangor**, on 28 June 2016, marking the first attack by a domestic group; at least eight people were injured in the incident. Shortly after the bombing, Malaysian and Indonesian IS militants based in Syria released a video declaring war on the governments of both countries. In addition, the group's establishment of a foothold in parts of the Mindanao and Sulu Archipelago in the neighbouring Philippines, which are only a 45-minute speedboat ride away from **eastern Sabah state**, has likely emboldened radicalised individuals in Malaysia to mobilise and consolidate themselves. These developments point to the worrying trend that regional IS-linked or IS-influenced groups and individuals are cooperating with militants based abroad and with returning fighters.

The government passed an anti-terror law called the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) to combat the increased threat posed by new radical groups like IS. Under the new legislation, authorities have the power to issue two-year detentions or five-year restriction orders for suspected individuals that can be renewed indefinitely. POTA also empowers counter-terrorism authorities to seize travel documents of both citizens and foreigners, impose harsher penalties on those who are convicted while under restriction and punish by up to 30 years in jail for the act of training, travelling or building transportation devices for terrorist purposes. Though local law enforcement agencies have so far been capable of neutralising domestic terror threats at an early stage through surveillance and arrests of suspected terror cells members, the growing threat posed by Islamist militants indicates that the likelihood of a further terrorist attack on Malaysian soil, although still relatively low by regional standards, remains possible.

**Southern Thai Insurgency:** There is a threat of guerilla activity on the Malaysia-Thailand border due to the ongoing decades-long Islamist insurgency in Thailand's ethnically Malay southern provinces. Low-level clashes and attacks are an almost daily occurrence in the Thai provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Songkhla. Incidents have included arson attacks, bombings, targeted and random shootings, stabbings and executions. However, the insurgency has remained localised in southern Thailand

and has not spilled into Malaysia; but the risk of a spillover of hostilities into Malaysian territory in the future cannot be ruled out.

Malaysian authorities have increased border security in the region. However, it should be noted that many residents of the four provinces have both Thai and Malaysian nationality, making it easy for terrorist elements to pass back and forth over the border, and difficult for security forces to apprehend those responsible for attacks. In addition, Thai authorities have been reluctant to strengthen border controls for fear of disrupting the tourism industry upon which they rely so heavily.

Exercise heightened personal safety awareness for travel to areas near the international border with Thailand in **Perlis, Kedah, Perak** and **Kelantan** states. While visitors to Malaysia have not been specifically targeted by insurgents in Thailand, travellers face the risk of incidental harm when clashes erupt in the area without warning. Liaise with local authorities and consider hiring an experienced local guide who is familiar with the territory and aware of what areas should be avoided. Track local media for situational updates.

## There are no recent incidents

## Unrest : ● Moderate Risk

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**Protests and Demonstrations:** Large protests are infrequent due to limited freedom of assembly on the grounds of maintaining security and public order. Political issues are the primary driver of demonstrations and most protests are peaceful. Police permission is required for public gatherings and protests, and they usually occur in designated plazas and stadiums. Popular protest locations in **Kuala Lumpur**, where most demonstrations are held, include the **National Palace, SOGO Mall, Houses of Parliament, Independence Square (Dataran Merdeka), United States (US) Embassy, Courts Complex, Jalan Bangsar** and **National Monument (Perdana Botanical Garden)**. Although in 2019, the Parliament amended the Peaceful Assembly Act (PPA), reducing the police notification period and introducing other changes, police continue to enforce restrictions and investigate protesters. Labour strikes are rare, and so is violent unrest.

Nonetheless, visitors are advised to avoid all large public gatherings as large crowds are inherently unstable and altercations and clashes cannot be ruled out. In case of unrest, law enforcement officials can deploy aggressive crowd control measures, such as tear gas and water cannons. Monitor local media for updates on rallies and avoid all large public gatherings. It is illegal for foreigners to participate in demonstrations.

**Ethnic Unrest:** Malaysian society is polarised along ethnic and religious lines. Latent tensions and policies favouring ethnic Malays (*Bumiputera*) implemented after past race riots remain sources of discontent among the ethnic Indian and Chinese populations. The divide between non-Malay/non-Muslim and Muslim/Malay populations grew even further in February 2020 after the break-up of the multiethnic PH coalition.

Future unrest sparked by right-wing elements of the majority Malay community cannot be ruled out. In the past, an attack on the **Seafeld Sri Maha Mariamman Hindu Temple** in **Subang Jaya, Selangor state** and the devotees inside by right-wing Malays led to clashes and ultimately escalated into a riot. Although police intervention is swift in cases of unrest, similar events threaten ethnic relations.

## Recent incidents

22 December 2023 - 23 December 2023

- **Moderate risk: Activists plan to demonstrate in Kuala Lumpur on 22 December**

United States Embassy officials reported that activists plan to stage a demonstration outside the embassy building (Jalan Tun Razak) in Kuala Lumpur from 14:00 local time (06:00 GMT) on 22 December. Further details on the cause of the protest were not immediately available.

15 December 2023 - 16 December 2023

- **Moderate risk: Protest march planned in Kuala Lumpur on 15 December**

The United States (US) Embassy in Kuala Lumpur indicated that a protest march from the Tabung Haji Head Office, along Jalan Tun Razak to a location near the US Embassy, is planned from 14:00 local time (06:00 GMT) on 15 December. Further details were not immediately available.

16 November 2023 - 21 November 2023

- **Moderate risk: PN supporters to rally in Terengganu, Kelantan and Putrajaya on 16, 18 and 20 November**

Perikatan Nasional (PN) supporters will rally in Terengganu on 16 November, in Kelantan (Sultan Muhammad IV Stadium) on 18 November and in Putrajaya (Palace of Justice) at 09:00 local time (01:00 GMT) on 20 November, to protest proposed changes to the Shari'a criminal code.

28 October 2023 - 29 October 2023

- **Moderate risk: Pro-Palestine march planned in Kuala Lumpur**

Demonstrators plan to gather at KLCC Mosque in Kuala Lumpur from 14:00 local time (06:00 GMT) for a march along Jalan Tun Razak to the Icon and Menara See Hoy Chan buildings near the United States Embassy in support of Palestine amid the ongoing Israeli military operations in Gaza.

## Crime : ● Medium Risk

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**Petty Crime:** Petty crime, such as pickpocketing and bag snatching, is high, especially in urban areas. Caution should be exercised in **Kuala Lumpur's Chow Kit area, Brickfields (Jalan Thambipillay), Petaling Street in Chinatown, Bangsar's Jalan Telawi, Little India, Plaza Central** and the **Sentul neighbourhood**. Criminals often snatch bags while passing by on motorbikes. Visitors have been injured having attempted to cling on to their valuables. Such attacks often target lone women or women with children and may occur in broad daylight.

Beware of your surroundings, do not leave your belongings unattended and exercise general personal safety for travel. Only carry what is needed, do not flash expensive valuables or large sums of money, and keep cash, identification and mobile phones in front pockets, or in a zipped or concealed pocket or pouch rather than in a bag. Secure belongings when using public transport or when frequenting markets and other crowded public areas; secure bags diagonally across the body against the chest, keep bags within sight and away from the street. Refrain from using mobile phones or laptops in congested public places; avoid putting bags containing valuables on the ground. Avoid walking in poorly lit and isolated areas. Stay in groups. Reject rides or drinks from strangers and never leave drinks unattended. Exercise extreme caution when purchasing and consuming alcohol in public venues. Do not accept pamphlets in the street or shopping centres; these could be impregnated with potent and disorienting drugs, which permeate the skin. If you start to feel unwell, tell staff or close friends and do not leave the venue alone or with strangers. Shout to attract attention, if needed.

**Violent Crime:** Violent crimes, such as armed attacks targeting foreign nationals, are usually rare; however, sexual assaults targeting women have increased in recent years. There is also a risk of kidnapping and piracy in and around coastal areas of **Sabah state**, particularly to foreign nationals, that has prompted officials to adopt additional security measures in these areas.

Commonsense measures are best kept to ensure against becoming the victim of a violent crime. Travellers are advised to remain vigilant at all times and exercise general personal safety for travel: avoid walking alone at night, do not venture down roads with poor lighting and few access points. Be careful when using taxis and public transport and plot route bypasses around rowdy crowds. Seek local advice for areas to avoid. If you are held-up by an armed robber do not become confrontational as any



resistive behaviour may cause more violence by the attackers.

**Piracy and Banditry:** Piracy remains an ongoing problem. Several attacks have been reported in and around the **Strait of Malacca** and the waters between eastern **Sabah state** and the **southern Philippines**. The eastern Sabah districts of **Tawau, Semporna, Kunak, Lahad Datu, Kinabatangan, Sandakan** and **Beluran** were declared "special security zones". Owners and operators of commercial shipping vessels travelling through Malaysian waters in the **South China Sea** are advised to maintain strict anti-piracy watches, particularly at night. Avoid travelling by boat in the southern **Sulu Sea**.

**Piracy:** In areas without an effective naval force or coast guard, shipping vessels may be vulnerable to an increased risk of pirate attacks. While attacks typically occur on vessels that are berthed or anchored, attacks on moving ships cannot be ruled out. Consult a local port agent or the Maritime Police for the current security situation, designated safe anchorage areas and which vessels to use when crossing higher risk ports. Keep all doors locked if sleeping on board a vessel. Follow best practice safety procedures while travelling in the high seas: extinguish navigation lights, roll up ship ladders, sail as fast as possible and only at recommended times, use barbed wire and avoid engagement with any fishing boats or vessels requesting assistance. Ensure access to updated HF emergency frequencies to broadcast mayday calls in the event of pirate sightings. Report all suspicious activity to the nearest coastal state and flag state.

**Vehicle Crime:** Vehicle theft is common. Despite sustained police efforts, opportunistic criminals and highly-organised syndicates continue to operate across Malaysia, particularly in the **Klang Valley** and **Greater Kuala Lumpur**. Car theft rings typically target unoccupied vehicles, occasionally attacking individuals as they enter or exit their vehicles. Malaysian police indicate that Proton, Perodua, Toyota and Honda are the most commonly targeted vehicle brands.

**Break-ins:** Expensive-looking vehicles, especially 4x4s, or vehicles with visible valuables are commonly targeted. Visitors should park cars in well-lit areas, preferably in private parking lots with security and ensure that all valuables, including vehicle's papers/insurance, are removed from the vehicle. Lock car doors at all times and make sure windows are rolled up. If renting a vehicle, ensure that it is fitted with a secure car alarm.

**Fraud and Scams:** Malaysia has one of the world's highest rates of credit card fraud. Visitors should be extremely cautious when using both credit and ATM cards in

Malaysia, even in high-end hotels. Certain hotels no longer accept credit cards due to the frequency of card crime. Travellers should only use credit cards when an electronic transaction is possible and when the transaction can be completed directly in front of them. Never let a clerk, sales assistant or waiter take a card to another location for the transaction to be processed.

Credit Card fraud: Visitors should only use credit cards when an electronic transaction is possible and when the transaction can be completed directly in front of them. Never let a clerk, sales assistant or waiter take a card to another location for the transaction to be processed. If this cannot be avoided, visitors should insist upon going with the individual to the point of sale to witness the transaction. Keep an eye on the card at all times. Always ensure that you receive a receipt and check the amount to be correct.

**Kidnapping:** Foreign nationals face a risk of kidnapping in coastal areas of **Sabah state** perpetrated mostly by militants and pirates operating out of neighbouring Philippines. While authorities have significantly increased security presence in **eastern Sabah state**, kidnapping incidents continue to be reported as authorities are unable to effectively patrol the entire area given its size and remoteness.

Travellers should remain aware of their surroundings and follow the latest advisories for their destination. Maintain communications and your itinerary with local contacts, authorities or embassy staff, especially in locations with a higher risk of kidnapping. Consider a local guide or security escort for the highest risk locations.

## Recent incidents

17 October 2023 - 18 October 2023

### ● **Moderate risk:** Sea curfew in Sabah to be extended - Update

A nightly sea curfew from 18:00-06:00 local time (10:00-22:00 GMT) for waters three kilometres (five nautical miles) off Sandakan, Semporna, Kunak, Lahad Datu, Kinabatangan and Beluran in Sabah state's Eastern Sabah Safety Zone (ESSZone) will be in effect from 18:00 today; Tawau's waters will be exempted from the curfew. The end date of the new curfew was not set. Officials maintained the curfew since 2 September but did not publish the directive.

18 August 2023 - 03 September 2023

● **Moderate risk: Authorities extend sea curfew in Sabah until 2 September - Update**

A sea curfew from 18:00-06:00 local time (10:00-22:00 GMT) for waters three kilometres (five nautical miles) off Tawau, Semporna, Kunak, Lahad Datu, Kinabatangan, Sandakan and Beluran in Sabah state's Eastern Sabah Security Zone (ESSZone) was extended until at least 2 September, due to threats of militant attacks and cross-border criminal activities.

11 August 2023 - 12 August 2023

● **Medium risk: Authorities arrest two suspects following kidnapping of foreign nationals in Klang, Selangor**

Local media reported that two men were arrested by security forces on 11 August, after they allegedly kidnapped two foreign women in Klang, Selangor state, and attempted to obtain a ransom of RM 20,000 (USD 4,315). Further details were not immediately available.

04 August 2023 - 19 August 2023

● **Moderate risk: Authorities extend sea curfew in Sabah until 18 August - Update**

A sea curfew from 18:00-06:00 local time (10:00-22:00 GMT) for waters three kilometres (five nautical miles) off Tawau, Semporna, Kunak, Lahad Datu, Kinabatangan, Sandakan and Beluran in Sabah state's Eastern Sabah Security Zone (ESSZone) was extended until at least 18 August, due to threats of militant attacks and cross-border criminal activities.

# Law

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# Corruption

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# Security Services

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**Security Services:** The Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), or Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM) in Malay, is assisted by a support group of Extra Police Constables, Police Volunteer Reserves, Auxiliary Police, Police Cadets and a civilian service element. An anti-riot force known as the Federal Reserve Unit also makes up part of the police force. In addition to the Federal Reserve Unit, the Police maintain two paramilitary divisions: the General Operations Forces and the Pasukan Gerakan Khas (Special Operations Force). Officers generally speak English and are approachable in urban areas; however, if you are a victim of crime, the police cannot be relied upon to seek restitution. If your passport or valuables are stolen, it is best to contact your embassy from the police station where the report is lodged and keep a copy of your police report.

Police brutality, corruption and enforced disappearances are major issues and have been linked to inadequate oversight. Police often use violence and arbitrary detention as a means of intimidation. The police have historically committed extra-judicial killings and torture of anti-government activists. The RMP is also accused of engaging in illegal activities, and local fishermen along the **Strait of Malacca** and **Sabah state** claim that Malaysian Marine Police officers regularly harass local fishers and demand bribes. Piracy victims often do not report attacks due to suspected collusion between the police and the pirates.

# Natural Risks : ● Moderate Risk

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The country is affected by seasonal monsoon storms between October and February in the **northeastern states**, and between April and October in the **southwestern states**. These may cause heavy flooding and landslides. Earthquakes can happen but are rare. Emergency services in Malaysia are generally well equipped and efficient in dealing with natural disasters.

## Flooding

A flood is an overflow of water that submerges land that is usually dry. It is normally triggered by an extended period of heavy rainfall and can be exacerbated by poor drainage systems in the affected area.

Flooding is common throughout Malaysia, and one or more regions are badly affected each year. December and January are usually the wettest months when heavy rain causes mudslides and rivers to burst their banks. The areas most at risk of flooding during the rainy season are **Kelantan** and **Terengganu** states in the east and **Johor state** in the south. In addition, flash floods can happen without little warning during periods of heavy downpour in urban areas like **Kuala Lumpur** and **Penang** due to inadequate drainage systems. Flooding can cause significant overland travel disruptions and cut off essential services like electricity and fresh water.

If instructed of the possibility that flash-flooding may affect the area you are in, monitor local updates and move immediately to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks and storm drains. Though flash-flooding is commonly attributable to excess upstream precipitation, be aware that flooding can occur without typical warning signs of rain clouds or heavy rain. This is especially true near streams, drainage channels, canyons and other areas known to flood suddenly. If you happen across a flooded road in your car, turn around and drive in the opposite direction. When trapped on a flooded road, vacate your vehicle immediately and climb to higher ground.

## Landslides/Mudslides

Sometimes referred to as debris flows, mudflows, lahars or debris avalanches,

landslides/mudslides are a form of mass soil movement that tends to flow in channels in a surge of water-saturated rock, earth and debris, typically following heavy rainfall.

Landslides can occur across the country, especially on hillsides and steep slopes, following periods of heavy rainfall. Areas prone to landslides include the hilly areas of **Pahang** and **Perak** states including the **Cameron Highlands**, **Bukit Tinggi** and **Gua Tempurung**.

Follow local news updates in landslide prone areas for warnings about intense storms and rainfall. If landslide or debris flow danger is imminent, quickly move away from the path of the slide. Seek shelter on the nearest high ground in a direction away from the path. If rocks and debris are approaching, run for the nearest shelter and take cover (if possible, under a desk, table or other piece of sturdy furniture that can provide you with air space if the building collapses). Anticipate disruptions to overland travel in areas affected by landslides. Confirm the viability of intended overland travel routes before departure and remain alert for landslide warning signs including cracks in the soil or the faint rumbling sound of an approaching landslide or debris flow.

## Earthquakes

An earthquake is the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of subterranean rock as it releases strain that has accumulated over a long period. Initial mild shaking may worsen and become extremely violent within a matter of seconds. Additional earthquakes, called aftershocks, may follow the initial earthquake.

While the country is not situated directly along the Rim of Fire, it is still affected by occasional earthquakes and, less commonly, tsunamis. The south of the country and state of **Sabah** are particularly at risk; a 5.2 magnitude earthquake hit **Sabah** in 2018.

When shaking begins, drop to the ground and take cover under, and hold on to, a sturdy piece of furniture, such as a heavy desk or table that can provide you with air space if the building collapses. If you're not near a strong piece of furniture, crouch down and protect your head and face in an inner corner of a building; only stand in a doorway if you know it is strongly supported. Stay away from windows or glass panels. Most deaths and injuries in an earthquake are caused by collapsing building materials



and heavy falling objects. Stay indoors until the tremors stop and you are sure it is safe to exit. Avoid all areas in the vicinity of outer walls and doorways, as these are most prone to falling debris. In a high-rise building, the electricity may go out and the sprinkler systems may come on. Do not use the elevators. If the lights go out, avoid using candles, matches or lighters during or after the earthquake; if there is a gas leak, an explosion could result. If outdoors, move to an open space away from buildings, electric poles and street lights which are prone to collapse. Do not travel on roads and bridges which may have been damaged by the earthquake. Be prepared for secondary earth movements that follow the initial earthquake; some of these may be large enough to cause additional damage or bring down weakened structures.

## Tsunami

Tsunamis are commonly generated by an earthquake-induced movement of the ocean floor. A strong earthquake lasting 20 seconds or more near the coast is likely to generate a tsunami and imminent coastal impact, possibly before warnings can be issued. However, all offshore or coastal earthquakes carry the potential of generating tsunamis. Warning signs of a tsunami include a sudden rise and fall in coastal sea levels.

While Malaysia is rarely at risk of tsunamis, earthquakes in the Indian Ocean can generate tsunamis strong enough to reach the country's coastline, especially on the northeastern and southern coasts of peninsular Malaysia. The devastating tsunami triggered by a powerful earthquake in the Indian Ocean in December 2004 killed at least 67 people, mainly in **Penang** and **Kedah** states.

In areas at risk of tsunamis, know the height of your street above sea level and the distance of your street from the coast or other at-risk waters. Areas which are less than 7.5 metres (25 feet) above sea level and/or within 1.5 kilometres (one mile) of the coastline are perceived to be the most at risk. Evacuation orders may be based on these numbers. Immediately move inland or to higher ground in the event of a tsunami alert/warning; stay away from the beach. In the absence of an official warning, if you are on the coast and feel an earthquake, or if there is a noticeable recession in water away from the shoreline this is a natural warning of a possible tsunami and should be heeded; move away immediately. Remain out of the tsunami hazard zone until local officials advise otherwise.

## Recent incidents

28 November 2023 - 30 November 2023

- **Moderate risk:** Authorities warn of heavy rainfall in Kelantan and Terengganu states until 29 November

Authorities issued second-highest level heavy rainfall warnings for Tumpat, Pasir Mas, Kota Bharu, Bachok and Pasir Puteh districts in Kelantan state, and the Besut district in Terengganu state, effective until 29 November.

21 November 2023 - 23 November 2023

- **Medium risk:** Officials warn of heavy rainfall in Kelantan and Terengganu states until 22 November - Update

Officials issued second-highest-level heavy rainfall warnings for Tumpat, Pasir Mas, Kota Bharu, Tanah Merah, Bachok, Machang and Pasir Puteh districts in Kelantan state, and Besut, Setiu, Kuala Nerus, Kuala Terengganu and Marang districts in Terengganu state, effective until 22 November. At least three people were evacuated in the Kampung Pachakan area of the Besut district during morning hours local time due to flooding.

20 November 2023 - 21 November 2023

- **Medium risk:** Heavy rainfall forecast in Terengganu, Kelantan and Pahang

Authorities issued the highest-level red heavy rainfall warning which also had the potential to trigger floods in Terengganu's Besut, Setiu, Kuala Nerus, Kuala Terengganu, Marang, Dungun and Kemaman areas; a second-highest level orange heavy rainfall warning was in effect in Upper Terengganu, as well as in Kelantan's Tumpat, Pasir Mas, Kota Bharu, Tanah Merah, Bachok, Machang and Pasir Puteh, and Pahang's Jerantut and Kuantan areas for the rest of the day.

09 November 2023 - 12 November 2023

## ● **Medium risk:** Flash flood triggers closure of Lawas Airport in Sarawak

Local sources reported that a flash flood caused by torrential rainfall triggered the closure of Lawas Airport (LWY/WBGW), which serves Lawas, in the Limbang Division, Sarawak, as of morning hours local time. A total of 12 flights scheduled for today were cancelled and the airport is expected to remain closed until at least 11 November.

# Health and Medical: ● Moderate Risk

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## Overview

Medical facilities in Malaysia are generally adequate, with good and affordable care of international standards available in **Kuala Lumpur** and other major cities. However, modern health care in rural areas is limited. Medical tourism, especially for cosmetic surgery, is common. Emergency response is reliable in major cities but less so in rural areas.

## Before you travel

Consult your doctor or a healthcare provider who specialises in travel medicine at least six weeks before your departure. If you have a medical condition, you should also share your travel plans with your doctor.

## Outbreaks and Other Diseases

### Malaria

#### Areas with Malaria:

- No indigenous cases of human malaria since 2017
- Zoonotic transmission of simian malaria occurs in rural, forested areas
- No malaria transmission in other areas, including Kuala Lumpur (the capital), in Penang State, on Penang Island, or in George Town (capital of Penang State)

#### Recommended chemoprophylaxis:

- In rural, forested areas: atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, mefloquine, tafenoquine

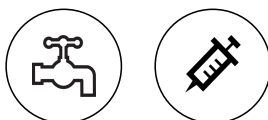
## Yellow Fever

There is no risk of Yellow Fever infection.

## Vaccinations, Medicines and Documentation

**Note:** Requirements and recommendations for vaccines and other medicines as well as Yellow Fever vaccine are based on guidelines from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Yellow Book 2024. All other entry requirements are based on Riskline research.

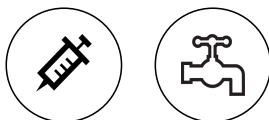
### Routine vaccines



Make sure you are up-to-date on all routine vaccines before every trip. Some of these vaccines include

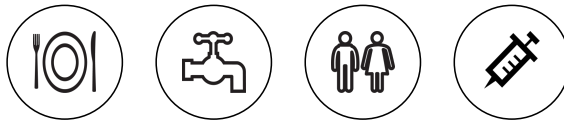
- Chickenpox (Varicella)
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis
- Flu (influenza)
- Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR)
- Polio
- Shingles

### COVID-19



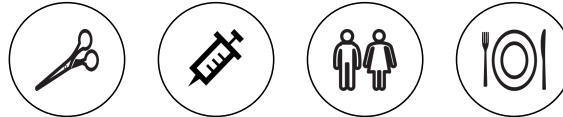
All eligible travellers should be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines.

## Cholera



There is no longer active cholera transmission and vaccine is not recommended.

## Hepatitis A



Recommended for unvaccinated travellers one year old or older going to Malaysia.

Infants 6 to 11 months old should also be vaccinated against Hepatitis A. The dose does not count toward the routine 2-dose series.

Travellers allergic to a vaccine component or who are younger than 6 months should receive a single dose of immune globulin, which provides effective protection for up to 2 months depending on dosage given.

Unvaccinated travellers who are over 40 years old, immunocompromised, or have chronic medical conditions planning to depart to a risk area in less than 2 weeks should get the initial dose of vaccine and at the same appointment receive immune globulin.

## Hepatitis B



Recommended for unvaccinated travellers younger than 60 years old traveling to Malaysia.

Unvaccinated travellers 60 years and older may get vaccinated before traveling to Malaysia.

## Japanese Encephalitis



Recommended for travellers who

- Are moving to an area with Japanese encephalitis to live
- Spend long periods of time, such as a month or more, in areas with Japanese encephalitis
- Frequently travel to areas with Japanese encephalitis

Consider vaccination for travellers

- Spending less than a month in areas with Japanese encephalitis but will be doing activities that increase risk of infection, such as visiting rural areas, hiking or camping, or staying in places without air conditioning, screens, or bed nets
- Going to areas with Japanese encephalitis who are uncertain of their activities or how long they will be there

Not recommended for travellers planning short-term travel to urban areas or travel to areas with no clear Japanese encephalitis season.

## Malaria



CDC recommends that travellers going to certain areas of Malaysia take prescription medicine to prevent malaria. Depending on the medicine you take, you will need to start taking this medicine multiple days before your trip, as well as during and after your trip. Talk to your doctor about which malaria medication you should take.

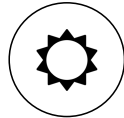
Find country-specific information about malaria.

## Measles



Infants 6 to 11 months old traveling internationally should get 1 dose of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine before travel. This dose does not count as part of the routine childhood vaccination series.

## Rabies



Rabid dogs are commonly found in Malaysia. However, if you are bitten or scratched by a dog or other mammal while in Malaysia, rabies treatment is often available.

Consider rabies vaccination before your trip if your activities mean you will be around dogs or wildlife.

Travellers more likely to encounter rabid animals include

- Campers, adventure travellers, or cave explorers (spelunkers)
- Veterinarians, animal handlers, field biologists, or laboratory workers handling animal specimens
- Visitors to rural areas

Since children are more likely to be bitten or scratched by a dog or other animals, consider rabies vaccination for children traveling to Malaysia.

## Typhoid



Recommended for most travellers, especially those staying with friends or relatives or visiting smaller cities or rural areas.



## Required documentation

### Yellow Fever entry requirement (Source: USA CDC):

Required for travellers one year and older arriving from countries with risk for YF virus transmission; this includes longer than 12-hour airport transits or layovers in countries with risk for YF virus transmission.

### Other entry requirements:

#### Entry Permission

Effective from 1 December, most inbound travellers are required to fill out the Malaysia Digital Arrival Card (MDAC) upon or before arrival to Malaysia. From 1 January 2024, travellers who are required to fill out the MDAC must do so within 72 hours before arrival; a grace period allowing travellers to complete the MDAC upon arrival is in effect through 31 December. Travellers who are exempted from the MDAC requirement:

- Nationals of Singapore
- Those transiting through Singapore without seeking immigration clearance
- Malaysian permanent residents
- holders of the Malaysia Automated Clearance System (MACS)
- holders of Malaysia's long-term passes
- holders of Brunei common identification certificates
- holders of Thai border passes
- holders of Indonesian Cross-Border passes
- Travellers eligible for the Malaysia Frequent Traveller Facility

Document link: <https://imigresen-online.imi.gov.my/mdac/main?registerMain>

**Note:** Documentation requirements are subject to change. Consult your destination embassy or consulate prior to departure for confirmation.

## While you are there

### Emergency Numbers

Medical	999	
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## Emergency services

Ambulances and emergency services are supplied by the Malaysian Red Crescent and St. John's Ambulance. They can be erratic in their arrival times and provision of care. Decompression chambers are available in **Kuala Lumpur, Kuantan, Lumut, Ipoh, Semporna and Labuan**.

## Evacuation

It is very unlikely medical evacuation would be required for injury or illness.

## Routine care

High-quality medical care is available in **Kuala Lumpur** and other major cities, with numerous well-equipped private hospitals and 24-hour clinics. Public hospitals in major cities have a good range of medical services; however, access can be slow. Doctor's consultations are relatively inexpensive and almost all medical professionals are able to converse in English. However, healthcare facilities can be very limited in more rural areas.

## Medicine

There are no known issues with the availability or quality of prescription and over-the-counter medicine. All prescription drugs should be kept in their original container noting the patient's name. Travellers are also advised to carry their prescription scripts and a letter from a medical doctor stating the chemical composition of the drugs and explaining the need for the medication and justifying the quantities needed.

## Payment

Up-front or cash payments may be required prior to treatment, even for individuals with medical insurance. Whenever possible, check with medical providers for payment requirements prior to treatment. Travellers are advised to have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.

## Ailments

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## Cholera



*Cholera is a bacterial infection transmitted through contact with infected food or water – usually by infected faeces – and is most prevalent in areas with poor sanitary standards. Symptoms include heavy, watery diarrhoea, vomiting and muscle cramps. If left untreated, cholera can rapidly become fatal. Cholera can be treated with a course of rehydration and antibiotics.*

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## Leptospirosis



There have been sporadic cases of the rodent-borne disease recorded in recent years.

*Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection transmitted through contact with (or consumption of) soil, water or food contaminated by infected animal urine. Symptoms can occur in two phases: first stage symptoms include fever, diarrhoea, vomiting, jaundice, headaches and muscle and stomach aches; second stage – also known as Weil's disease – symptoms are more severe and may include meningitis and kidney or liver failure. Leptospirosis can be treated with a course of antibiotics.*

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## Dengue Fever



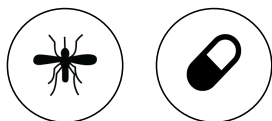
Dengue fever is common within Malaysia, including developed urban areas, and is particularly prevalent in **Kuala Lumpur**, and **Selangor** and **Perak** states.

*Dengue fever is a viral infection, transmitted by the bite of the Aedes mosquito, which is most active during early morning and late afternoon hours and is commonly found in urban areas. Symptoms include a high fever, joint pain and headaches, although severe cases may cause significant falls in blood pressure*

and/or haemorrhaging, which can be fatal. There are no vaccines or treatments for dengue fever.

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## Malaria



There is little risk of contracting malaria in most of the country. However, the disease is a concern in rural, hilly, forested areas in the interior. The problem is particularly prominent during the rainy season.

*Malaria is a serious parasitic infection, transmitted by the bite of the Anopheles mosquito. Symptoms can be flu-like and include a high fever, joint pain, anaemia, chills and headaches; if left untreated, symptoms can quickly complicate and become life-threatening. While pre-departure courses of anti-malarial prophylactics are available, these do not guarantee immunity to malaria. Caught early, malaria can be treated easily with a range of anti-malarial medications.*

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## Sarcosporidiosis



Multiple cases in the past have been reported on **Tioman Island** in **Pahang state** over the summer months.

*Sarcosporidiosis is a parasitic infection transmitted through the consumption of undercooked meat from infected cattle or pigs. Symptoms include muscle and stomach pain, fever, diarrhoea and weakness. There is no uniform treatment for sarcosporidiosis; most cases are asymptomatic.*

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## Traveller's diarrhoea (TD)



*Traveller's diarrhoea (TD) is a catch-all term for a number of minor or moderate bacterial, viral and parasitic infections, generally transmitted through infected food or water. In the majority of cases antibiotics or anti-diarrhoeal medication is unnecessary; travellers experiencing TD should ensure that they remain hydrated and well rested until their symptoms dissipate. Most cases of TD last less than three days; if diarrhoea continues for longer periods, travellers should consider consulting a medical professional.*

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## Typhus



*Typhus fevers are a group of diseases caused by bacteria that are spread to humans by arthropods (fleas, lice, and chiggers). There are three different types of typhus, and each type is caused by a different type of bacterium and transmitted by a different type of arthropod. Chiggers spread scrub typhus, fleas spread murine typhus, and body lice spread epidemic typhus. The most common symptoms are fever, headaches, and sometimes rash. Typhus outbreaks usually only occur in developing countries or in regions of poverty, poor sanitation, and close human contact. Untreated typhus can lead to serious complications, and is potentially fatal.*

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## Recent incidents

03 September 2023 - 04 September 2023

### ● **Low risk:** AirAsia resumes flights between Malaysia's Kota Kinabalu and China's Hangzhou - Update

Local media reported that AirAsia resumed flights between Malaysia's Kota Kinabalu International Airport (BKI/WBKK) and China's Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport (HGH/ZSHC) on 3 September, following a three-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

12 August 2023 - 29 August 2023

- **Moderate risk: Dengue cases continue to rise across the country - Update**

Health authorities recorded at least 73,680 dengue fever cases and 53 related fatalities across the country as of 12 August since the start of the year. The worst affected areas are Selangor state and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur.

05 July 2023 - 06 July 2023

- **Moderate risk: Authorities to ease COVID-19-related domestic measures from 5 July - Update**

Local media indicated that officials will lift the mask-wearing requirement for people on public transport and inside health facilities nationwide, effective from 5 July, due to an improving COVID-19 situation; healthcare workers and people who tested positive for COVID-19 must continue to wear facemasks when in public. The self-isolation requirement period for COVID-19 patients will be reduced from seven days to five.

15 May 2023 - 16 May 2023

- **Moderate risk: Officials report uptick in dengue fever cases in Johor state**

Authorities announced on 15 May that at least one recent dengue fever-related death and 218 cases were recorded in Johor state, marking a 30 percent increase from the previous week's positive cases and taking the state's total number of infections to 2,917 from the start of the year. Johor Bahru was the worst-hit area, with 154 dengue cases registered.



## Summary

Authorities have eased both international travel and domestic restrictions. The majority of the country's adult population has been fully vaccinated. Authorities lifted all COVID-19 entry requirements for international travellers. Healthcare workers and people who tested positive for COVID-19 must continue to wear facemasks when in public. From around mid-December, people who work at immigration counters and offices must wear facemasks; the public is urged to wear facemasks when at immigration.

**What is the current nationwide Policy?:** Open

**Policy starts:** 01 April  
2022

**Policy ends:** indef

### Policy explanation:

Authorities lifted all entry requirements. However, officials continue to impose surveillance measures for symptomatic arrivals.

**Policy source:** <https://covid-19.moh.gov.my/reopeningsafely/utama>

**Last update:** 09 November 2023

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## Infection

**Infection Level:** Low

**Infection rate:** 0.0 cases per 100k in the last 14  
days

**As of date:** 09 November 2023

**Hotspots:** -



## International Travel



### International Flights

**Is there a ban on international commercial flights?** No

**Through what date?** indef

#### Flight Ban Explanation:

There are no known bans on airlines operating in Malaysia. Travellers are allowed to transit via Malaysia for up to 24 hours.

MYAirline officials announced that flight operations, including international flights, were suspended nationwide, effective until further notice due to financial pressures.

SKS Airways suspended flights to Pulau Tioman Airport (TOD/WMBT) in Pahang state and Pulau Redang Aiport (RDN/WMPR) in Terengganu state until further notice due to financial issues.

**Last Update:** 09 November 2023

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### Entry and Borders

**Is there a ban on entry for any travellers?** No

**Through what date?** indef

**Travellers from where are banned?** Israel

**Land border:** Open

**Maritime border:** Open

#### Entry Rules Explanation:



Authorities lifted all COVID-19-related entry requirements and restrictions. Inbound travellers may still be subject to screening measures.

Regular public transportation services between **Singapore** and Johor Bahru have resumed. Land borders with **Brunei** and **Thailand** are also open.

Israeli passport holders are not allowed entry. Authorities banned all Israeli-owned and flagged ships, as well as vessels en route to Israel, from docking at Malaysian ports.

**Entry Rules:** <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/malaysia/entry-requirements>  
<https://mysejahtera.moh.gov.my/en/pengembara-ke-malaysia-en/non-fully-vaccinated-adult-travellers>

**Last Update:**

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## Testing

**Do travellers need to take a COVID-19 test** No

**When?**

**Is it mandatory or optional?**

**Test Type:**

**Minimum age requirement:**

**Pre-travel test validity, in hours:**

**After arrival test days:**

**Testing Explanation:**

All testing requirements were lifted.

**Testing Rules:** -

**Last Update:** 09 November 2023



## Health and Travel Documentations

**Do arriving travellers need any health and/or travel documentation?** Yes

### Documentation Explanation:

#### Entry Permission

Effective from 1 December, most inbound travellers are required to fill out the Malaysia Digital Arrival Card (MDAC) upon or before arrival to Malaysia.

From 1 January 2024, travellers who are required to fill out the MDAC must do so within 72 hours before arrival; a grace period allowing travellers to complete the MDAC upon arrival is in effect through 31 December.

Travellers who are exempted from the MDAC requirement:

- Nationals of Singapore
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- holders of Malaysia's long-term passes
- holders of Brunei common identification certificates
- holders of Thai border passes
- holders of Indonesian Cross-Border passes
- Travellers eligible for the Malaysia Frequent Traveller Facility

**Last Update:** 09 November 2023



## Tracing App

**Do travellers need to use a contact tracing app after arriving?** No

### Tracing App Explanation:

There is no mandatory national contact tracing app at this time.

**Last Update:** 09 November 2023

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## Quarantine on Arrival

**Who needs to quarantine on arrival** Some travellers

**Travellers from where need to quarantine?**

**How many days is quarantine?** 5

**Is it self-quarantine or operated by the government?** Self

### **Quarantine Explanation:**

Authorities lifted the on-arrival quarantine requirements for all international travellers.

**Quarantine Rules:** <https://www.malaysiaairlines.com/mhapp/hq/en/important-notice/malaysia.html>

**Last Update:** 2023-11-09

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## Exit

**Is there a ban on exit for any travellers?** No

**Are there special requirements to exit?** No

### **Exit Requirements Explanation:**

**Exit Requirements (URL):**

-

**Last Update:** 09 November 2023

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## Vaccination

**Percent vaccinated with at least one dose:** 86.946 as of 26 Oct 2023

**Percent fully vaccinated:** 81.19 as of 10 Nov 2023

**Is vaccination mandatory for entry?** No

**Fully vaccinated are exempt from:** -

**Minimum age for vaccine requirements for travel:**

**Exemptions for vaccine requirements for travel:**

**"Fully vaccinated" is defined by the destination as:**

**Accepted vaccines, validity and special age restrictions:**

**Is mixing of vaccine doses authorised?** Yes

**Are specific combinations of mixed doses required?** No

**"Boosted" is defined by the destination as:**

**Accepted boosters:**

**"Recently recovered" is defined by the destination as:**

Recovery status is valid from days until after .

**Vaccination certificates accepted:**

**Vaccination certificates accepted in the following languages:**

**Recent recovery document required:**

**Recent recovery document accepted in the following languages:**

**Explanation:**

**Sources:**

<https://mysejahtera.moh.gov.my/en/pengembara-ke-malaysia-en/non-fully-vaccinated-adult-travellers>

<https://mysejahtera.moh.gov.my/en/pengembara-ke-malaysia-en/fully-vaccinated-adult-travellers>

**Last change to  
vaccination  
policy:**

01 August 2022

**Last Update:**

09 November 2023



## Other International Travel Restrictions

## Exit Requirements Explanation:

Last Update:

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## Domestic Situation



### Areas on Lockdown

Last Update:

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### Areas under Curfew

Curfew An 18:00-06:00 local time curfew for waters three kilometres (five nautical miles) off **Semporna, Kunak, Lahad Datu, Kinabatangan, Sandakan** and **Beluran** in **Sabah state's Eastern Sabah Security Zone (ESSZone)**, due to threats of militant attacks and cross-border criminal activities, was set to remain in place until further notice.

Last Update: 09 November 2023

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## Domestic Travel

### Domestic Travel Explanation:

Fully-vaccinated nationals in Malaysia are allowed cross-state travel and cross-district activities without requiring permission from the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM).

**Langkawi Island** Langkawi Island in Kedah is open for domestic travellers. Several airlines, including AirAsia and Malaysia Airlines, resumed their domestic flights to the island.

**Last Update:** 09 November 2023

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## Other Domestic Restrictions

Physical distancing measures are in effect nationwide.

Individuals who test positive at any point when in Malaysia must undergo home quarantine for five days. These individuals must undergo COVID-19 tests to exit the isolation requirement.

**Last Update:** 09 November 2023

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## Resources

**Health Dept COVID Site:** <http://covid-19.moh.gov.my/>

**There are no recent incidents**

# Local Travel : ● Moderate Risk

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## Travel Safety

**Air Travel:** Malaysia's three main airports are **Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) (KUL/WMKK)**, **Penang International Airport (PEN/WMKP)** and **Kota Kinabalu International Airport (KKIA) (BKI/WBKK)**. Various international airlines fly to the **Kuala Lumpur Airport and the Penang Airport**.

Malaysia Airlines and the low-cost carrier Air Asia operate flights to domestic and regional destinations. Air Asia fares are cheap, though flights are more commonly delayed. Often, one single plane handles a long circuitous route. Malaysia Airlines was subject to two major disasters in 2014 – the disappearance of Beijing-bound flight MH370 in March and the shooting down of MH17 in July over Ukrainian airspace by suspected pro-Russian separatists – exacerbating the airline's financial difficulties and leading to the restructuring of the airline. In November 2019, the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) downgraded the safety rating of the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia (CAAM) from Category 1 to Category 2, preventing Malaysian carriers from establishing new services to the US but allowing current routes to the country to be maintained. At present, Air Asia is the only Malaysian carrier that operates a US-bound service which flies between **Kuala Lumpur** and Honolulu via Osaka, Japan.

Immigration and customs procedures are generally easy and passengers can expect relaxed security and baggage checks. Most passengers use the express Green Lane at the customs section. Bags are seldom subjected to an intense check.

**Kuala Lumpur International Airport** has good safety standards and facilities are modern and comfortable. However, on 14 February 2017, Kim Jong Nam – the estranged half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un – was assassinated with a chemical nerve agent by North Korean agents in the check-in area of the airport, highlighting concerns over the facility's vulnerability. Nevertheless, the incident appeared to be an isolated one. Other airports in Malaysia are basic and compact with reasonably modern facilities.

There is a direct train available between **Kuala Lumpur International Airport** and **KL Sentral Station**, with flight check-in facilities available at the station itself. Taxi services are also readily available at major airports.

**Airspace:** There are no known bans on airlines operating in Malaysia. Travellers are

allowed to transit via Malaysia for up to 24 hours.

MYAirline officials announced that flight operations, including international flights, were suspended nationwide, effective until further notice due to financial pressures.

SKS Airways suspended flights to Pulau Tioman Airport (TOD/WMBT) in Pahang state and Pulau Redang Airport (RDN/WMPR) in Terengganu state until further notice due to financial issues.

**Borders and Entry:** Authorities lifted all COVID-19-related entry requirements and restrictions. Inbound travellers may still be subject to screening measures.

Regular public transportation services between **Singapore** and Johor Bahru have resumed. Land borders with **Brunei** and **Thailand** are also open.

Israeli passport holders are not allowed entry. Authorities banned all Israeli-owned and flagged ships, as well as vessels en route to Israel, from docking at Malaysian ports.

**Road Travel:** Traffic in Malaysia moves on the left. Malaysia has an extensive road network and driving standards relatively high. Roads are generally in good condition in **Peninsular Malaysia** but less so in **East Malaysia**. Signage is in the local language.

Travellers should be aware of reckless drivers, especially at night and when walking near the road. Vehicles do not always stop at traffic lights or pedestrian crossings. Be extra cautious when driving in the rain, as your visibility may be impaired.

Motorcyclists are a common traffic hazard, and motorbike accidents are common as motorcyclists weave in and out of busy, fast-moving traffic; motorcyclists can get confrontational if reprimanded. Leaving the scene of an accident is a serious offence in Malaysia and the police will prosecute those who do.

Speed limits are enforced by traffic police, who set up cameras and roadblocks to catch speeding drivers. On motorways, the limit is 110kph (70 mph) and on other rural roads, it is 90kph (55 mph). Urban limits vary, but the most common is 60kph (40 mph).

**Rail Travel:** **Kuala Lumpur** has a developed intra-city rail network, which connects the city centre to suburbs in **Selangor**. Trains to outlying major towns are often late, with the exception of destinations like **Penang**, **Ipoh**, **Seremban** and Singapore, which lie along the same route. The "Jungle Railway", popular with travellers, is a single-track eastern line between **Tumpat** and **Gemas**; this service is slow and lacks modern facilities.



The **KL Sentral Station** in **Kuala Lumpur** is a convergence point for the trans-national KTMB network, the intra-city Putra and Monorail networks and buses to popular tourist destinations. The train system in Malaysia is inexpensive, clean and safe to use for visitors. However, care should be taken to safeguard belongings on busy urban commuter trains, as there are occasional instances of pickpockets operating on these services.

## Public Transport

**Ferries and Boats:** Ferries connect various points in Peninsular Malaysia to smaller islands, with Sumatra in Indonesia and southern Thailand, **Sarawak** with Brunei, and **Sabah** with East Kalimantan in Indonesia and Mindanao in the Philippines. Safety measures are minimal and do not always comply with international standards. Boat services seldom stick to schedules and trips are subject to change without notice. Several passenger boats have sunk between **Tanjung Aru** and **Pulau Mengalum, Sabah state**, in the past. Use common sense and do not board vessels that are overcrowded or look unseaworthy. Before travelling, check for appropriate safety equipment available, and always use a life jacket.

**Buses:** Bus networks within cities are fairly reliable and extremely safe. Avoid travelling by bus to the **Cameron Highlands (Tanah Tinggi Cameron)** and **Genting Highlands (Resorts World Genting)**, two popular tourist destinations in **Pahang state** where accidents are common due to poor road conditions in mountainous terrain. Book a taxi or rent a private vehicle as an alternative.

Long-distance "Express" buses travel direct to Singapore and Bangkok. Partner buses across the border often pick up passengers at the exit end of immigration facilities. The centre for express buses is the decrepit **Puduraya Bus Station** in **Kuala Lumpur**. Beware of ticket touts who offer timely journeys; they are not reliable. Several fatal or serious accidents have occurred on long-distance buses. Travellers are advised to choose a reputable company and avoid overnight travel.

**Taxis:** Taxis are widely available in urban areas but in rural areas may have to be booked in advance. Marked taxis are generally a safe and reliable mode of transportation in urban areas. Unofficial taxis should be avoided; drivers of these unlicensed vehicles have previously attempted to sexually assault lone female passengers and several robberies have occurred in **Kuala Lumpur**. If you are travelling alone, call your hotel or a friend when entering a taxi at night. If you have a mobile phone, send an SMS with the taxi's registration number to a friend. The registration number should be prominently displayed on the left-hand corner of the

dashboard.

Though metered taxis are widely available in **Kuala Lumpur**, drivers may overcharge or refuse to offer metered rates, particularly near **Kuala Lumpur International Airport** and the **Bukit Bintang** shopping and entertainment district. If a taxi is equipped with a meter, passengers should insist on its use before boarding. In the absence of a meter, always negotiate fares prior to departure, preferably with local assistance. Travellers arriving at **Kuala Lumpur International Airport** are advised to pay for taxi fares at a designated counter located in the Arrivals section. Be aware that fees vary depending on the taxi's colour scheme - e.g. budget taxis are usually red, white or yellow, while blue taxis are more expensive.

If possible, book taxis by phone or use a taxi desk. Travellers are advised to book taxis by phone. Taxis are not permitted to pick up additional passengers. If they do, disembark when it is safe to do so. Travellers are advised to use ride-sharing apps as they are often cheaper, the vehicles are clean and more comfortable than regular taxis and their drivers friendly and professional.

**Vehicle Hire:** Rental cars from international and national firms are widely available and can often be booked in advance. Most rental vehicle companies are reliable and safe, especially if they are recommended by a major hotel or tourism centre.

## **Movement Control Orders**

**Curfew:** Curfew An 18:00-06:00 local time curfew for waters three kilometres (five nautical miles) off **Semporna, Kunak, Lahad Datu, Kinabatangan, Sandakan** and **Beluran** in **Sabah state's Eastern Sabah Security Zone (ESSZone)**, due to threats of militant attacks and cross-border criminal activities, was set to remain in place until further notice.

## **Recent incidents**

20 December 2023 - 21 December 2023

### ● **Moderate risk: Malaysian authorities ban Israeli-owned ships from docking**

Malaysian authorities announced that all Israeli owned and flagged ships, as well as vessels enroute to Israel, were banned from docking at Malaysian ports with immediate effect, in response to the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Hamas in Gaza.

15 December 2023 - 16 January 2024

- **Moderate risk:** Upgrade works to impact Johor Bahru Checkpoint for Singapore-Malaysia land border crossing from 15 December-15 January 2024

Local sources indicated that longer inbound and outbound immigration processing times were possible at the Johor Bahru Checkpoint of the land border crossing between Singapore and Malaysia's Johor Bahru in Johor state from 15 December until 15 January 2024 due to entry/exit bus zone counter closures for upgrade works.

06 December 2023 - 02 January 2024

- **Moderate risk:** Officials require most inbound travellers to fill out MDAC before entry - Update

Officials required most inbound travellers to fill out the Malaysia Digital Arrival Card (MDAC) upon or before arrival to Malaysia, effective until further notice. From 1 January 2024, travellers who are required to fill out the MDAC must do so within 72 hours before arrival; a grace period allowing travellers to complete the MDAC upon arrival is in effect through 31 December. Some travellers are exempted, including Singaporeans and holders of Malaysia long-term passes.

01 December 2023 - 01 December 2024

- **Low risk:** Chinese officials to allow visa-free entry of nationals of select countries from 1 December to 30 November 2024

Effective 1 December until 30 November 2024, as part of a trial policy, nationals of France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Malaysia will be allowed to enter China without a visa for up to 15 days. The visa-free entry will apply to travel for business, tourism, transit and family visits. Further details were not immediately available.

# Destination Hotspots

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Most urban centres in Malaysia are relatively safe and risks to foreign travellers are often limited to instances of non-violent economic crime.

# Safety

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## Emergency Numbers

Hazards	<b>15454</b>	
Child help-line	<b>15999</b>	
Medical	<b>999</b>	
Fire	<b>994</b>	
Police	<b>999</b>	

**Beaches and Public Areas:** Travellers should take great care when swimming in Malaysia. Strong currents, tidal changes and riptides are common and can be dangerous and not all beaches have lifeguards and/or warning flags. Travellers should obey any local warnings and stay alert. Avoid swimming alone and only swim from approved beaches. Remain watchful of valuables while at the beach and in other popular tourist destinations.

**National Parks:** Some national parks are protected areas are home to ethnic minority groups. Before entering a park, register your plans with park officials and inform someone you trust about your plans. Be respectful of the law and customs in these areas. Do not remove any wildlife or plants from the park. If in doubt, seek local advice.

**Drugs and Alcohol:** Malaysian authorities operate a zero-tolerance policy regarding illegal drugs and penalties are severe. Possession of even small quantities of narcotics incurs a custodial sentence, possible corporal punishment (lashing) and even the death penalty. There is a fixed death penalty for convicted drug traffickers. It is considered drug trafficking if in possession of 15 grams of heroin or 200 grams of marijuana.

Travellers might be asked to take a urine test on arrival in Malaysia if suspected of having used drugs prior to the visit. Urine tests can also be taken following raids on bars and nightclubs. If the test is positive, travellers could be detained, charged and/or deported and blacklisted.

Driving under the influence of alcohol is a serious offence in Malaysia and traffic police

regularly carry out breathaliser tests in entertainment districts frequented by expatriates. Anyone caught driving with over 0.5 milligrams of alcohol per millilitre of blood can face a heavy fine, deportation or a jail sentence.

**Food and Drink:** Water purity cannot be relied upon in Malaysia, especially outside urban areas. It is advised to drink bottled water or boil water thoroughly and to avoid ice cubes. Visitors should practice safe food and water precautions and avoid raw and undercooked food. Care should be taken in restaurants in rural areas as food hygiene is often poor. Street food is usually heavily flavoured with spices and visitors unused to such fare should exercise caution.

**Legal Punishments:** Muslims are subject to Shari'a, which varies by state, with **Kelantan** and **Terengganu** states stricter than others. Malaysia allows corporal punishment for certain crimes, such as drug offences, immigration violations, commercial crimes and rape. The death penalty can also be applied to numerous offences, particularly drug trafficking. Several laws, such as the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act and the Prevention of Crime Act, undermine due process guarantees. Additionally, the strict Sedition Act curtails freedom of speech.

**Photography:** Visitors should avoid photographing government and military installations or airports as this is prohibited.

**Security Services:** The Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), or Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM) in Malay, is assisted by a support group of Extra Police Constables, Police Volunteer Reserves, Auxiliary Police, Police Cadets and a civilian service element. An anti-riot force known as the Federal Reserve Unit also makes up part of the police force. In addition to the Federal Reserve Unit, the Police maintain two paramilitary divisions: the General Operations Forces and the Pasukan Gerakan Khas (Special Operations Force). Officers generally speak English and are approachable in urban areas; however, if you are a victim of crime, the police cannot be relied upon to seek restitution. If your passport or valuables are stolen, it is best to contact your embassy from the police station where the report is lodged and keep a copy of your police report.

Police brutality, corruption and enforced disappearances are major issues and have been linked to inadequate oversight. Police often use violence and arbitrary detention as a means of intimidation. The police have historically committed extra-judicial killings and torture of anti-government activists. The RMP is also accused of engaging in illegal activities, and local fishermen along the **Strait of Malacca** and **Sabah state** claim that Malaysian Marine Police officers regularly harass local fishers and demand

bribes. Piracy victims often do not report attacks due to suspected collusion between the police and the pirates.

**Weapons:** The importation of unlicensed firearms and ammunition into Malaysia is prohibited and possession can carry the death penalty.

# Culture

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**Cultural/Political/Religious Sensitivities:** The official religion is Islam and slightly over 60 percent of the population is Muslim. Other major religions are tolerated and can be practised openly. Muslims, by law, however, cannot convert to another faith and religious preaching to Muslims, including distributing non-Islamic religious materials, is illegal. The open practice and propagation of Shi'a Islam is strictly banned. Any citizen found subscribing to such beliefs can be detained without trial under the country's powerful Internal Security Act. Muslim travellers may be subject to Shari'a.

Be careful of intimate relationships with Malaysian Muslim citizens. Police can demand entry into any residence or hotel room, even exclusive ones, upon suspicions of cohabitation involving a local Muslim. Local Muslims are also governed by the Khalwat (close proximity) laws, which makes it unlawful for Muslims, particularly women, to be alone with a non-Muslim, foreigner or otherwise. Khalwat laws are rarely enforced at the workplace. Visitors should be careful not to offend local religious sensitivities and should respect local traditions, customs, laws and religions, especially during the holy month of Ramadan, other religious festivals or if intending to visit religious sites.

Malaysian men and women shake a proffered hand upon meeting a foreigner in urban areas. However, avoid extending the hand to Muslim women; people may put one hand over their chest and nod to greet. There are no conservative dress codes in cities like **Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh** and **Penang**. Still, travellers should dress modestly in conservative and rural areas and when visiting places of worship and government buildings.

Travellers should give and receive everything with two hands and eat only using the right hand, per Islamic principles. Shoes should be removed before entering someone's home; it is also common to remove shoes in some public buildings.

Visitors are advised not to criticise Malaysia or the Royal Family and to avoid discussing Malaysia's state of affairs and ethnic relations.



# Specific Traveller Advice

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## Female Travellers

**Local Customs and Laws:** There are some local customs that a female traveller should take into consideration in Malaysia, which is a Muslim-majority society. Outside urban areas, like **Kuala Lumpur**, **Penang**, **Ipoh** and **Langkawi**, that are not frequented by foreigners, it is advisable to wear clothes covering the shoulders and knees. Refrain from wearing clothing that could be considered too tight or revealing, especially in conservative areas, mosques and other religious places. Familiarise yourself with your destination prior to travel, and be respectful and mindful of any cultural sensitivities, which may include dress, behaviour and topics of discussions. Travel with a local guide if visiting a mosque as many mosques do not allow lone young female visitors; it is easier to negotiate the terms of entrance with a local guide.

**Safety:** There are some safety concerns that a female traveller should take into consideration in Malaysia. Foreign female travellers may receive unwanted attention from local men, ranging from open displays of catcalling, whistling, stalking and staring to physical groping outside of major cities. It is best to ignore these advances and walk away. Metro trains and buses are usually safe, including at night time, in major cities like **Kuala Lumpur** and **Putrajaya**. However, there are occasional incidents of harassment reported in trains after dark in rural areas. If available, consider sitting in women's only sections. Sexual assaults targeting women sometimes occur after dark near bars and pubs outside urban centres. Do not walk alone at night, especially in deserted areas, beaches or villages. In rural areas, do not use public transportation or hail taxis or rickshaws off the street at night to mitigate risks of assault. Opt for private, non-shared taxis; ensure the taxi is empty in the back before getting into the vehicle. Restrict evening entertainment to well-known avenues. Authorities are often slow in responding to sexual crimes outside major cities, and corruption is prevalent among police. Female travellers should exercise caution when reporting crimes to local police or authorities. Consider consulting your home consulate/embassy for legal advice and ensure you receive a copy of the police report.

**Health and Wellness:** Women have access to some specialised gynaecological and reproductive health services, medicines and products in Malaysia, especially in major cities like **Kuala Lumpur**. However, these services are limited in rural areas. Abortion is permitted only if there is a serious health risk to the woman or to preserve her mental and physical health. It might be difficult to obtain an abortion due to the

prevailing stigma around the issue. Rape kits, female-specific OTC drugs, emergency contraceptives and feminine hygiene products are not readily available in rural parts of the country. Consult a health professional prior to travel, especially if pregnant or planning to become pregnant, due to sporadic outbreaks of Zika in the territory. Consider bringing an adequate supply of feminine hygiene products, common female-specific OTC drugs and oral contraceptive pills, which may not be available locally.

## **LGBT+**

Homosexuality is illegal for males in Malaysia; while not definitively illegal for females, individuals can still be prosecuted for immoral or indecent acts. Persons found guilty of homosexual activity may be sentenced to lashings and/or prison for up to 20 years, though the law is rarely enforced in such manner. There are no legal protections for LGBT+ persons in the country. Same-sex marriage is illegal. LGBT+ activity and persons are not socially accepted and struggle to find acceptance in vast sections of the predominantly Muslim society and often face discrimination. In addition, Muslim LGBT+ individuals are often targeted and detained during raids by religious authorities as they are subject to Sharia law. LGBT+ travellers are advised to keep their sexual orientation and gender identities private. Prior to travel, review your privacy settings on social media platforms and reconsider the use of dating applications due to the risk of harassment and possible entrapment by local authorities. Refrain from engaging in any conversations about sexuality or LGBT+ issues. Avoid all public displays of affection, including hand-holding. Book separate hotel rooms. Transgender travellers are advised to have a passport and identification changed to reflect their new gender before travelling.

## **Technology & Communication Risk**

Travellers are likely to face risks related to information and communication technology (ICT) in Malaysia.

Internet access and social media have some restrictions. Some internet and social media content of political and religious nature cannot be accessed freely, and any associated social media posting may be unlawful, and users can be subject to arrest and jail sentences due to the country's strict sedition laws. The government has prosecuted several individuals for Facebook posts insulting the Prophet Muhammad and the King, who is considered a symbol of Islam. There are no concerns related to device searches or sensitive technology. Device searches and inspections at the border are unlikely. There are no restrictions in relation to bringing or operating sensitive equipment, which may include photo cameras, satellite phones, drones, and other GPS systems, in the country. State or criminal penetration of private data is

unlikely. Authorities implement some state surveillance of ICT networks in the country, particularly the monitoring of social media content deemed seditious and blasphemous.

Travellers should ensure that their ICT usage is compliant with local laws and regulations during their stay in the country. Travellers should expect possible restrictions in accessing specific internet websites/platforms and/or digital services. Posting specific content online may also be regulated; self-censorship is encouraged and journalists are given strict guidelines when reporting on sensitive issues. Travellers should note that ICT laws and practices are subject to change on short notice, and travellers are recommended to confirm the legality/appropriateness of their specific ICT needs prior to departure.

Travellers should be aware that the country enforces a limited degree of surveillance of telephone and electronic communications, and travellers should remember that communication may be monitored. Online activities may be monitored. Cyber-criminal groups may be present in the country. Exercise discretion in deciding to bring sensitive data into the country.

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