

The World Factbook



Malaysia



Introduction Malaysia

Background: During the late 18th and 19th centuries, Great Britain established colonies and protectorates in the area of current Malaysia; these were occupied by Japan from 1942 to 1945. In 1948, the British-ruled territories on the Malay Peninsula formed the Federation of Malaya, which became independent in 1957. Malaysia was formed in 1963 when the former British colonies of Singapore and the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak on the northern coast of Borneo joined the Federation. The first several years of the country's history were marred by Indonesian efforts to control Malaysia, Philippine claims to Sabah, and Singapore's secession from the Federation in 1965.

Geography Malaysia

Location: Southeastern Asia, peninsula bordering Thailand and northern one-third of the island of Borneo, bordering Indonesia, Brunei, and the South China Sea, south of Vietnam

Geographic coordinates: 2 30 N, 112 30 E

Map references: Southeast Asia

Area: *total:* 329,750 sq km
land: 328,550 sq km
water: 1,200 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly larger than New Mexico

Land boundaries: *total:* 2,669 km
border countries: Brunei 381 km, Indonesia 1,782 km, Thailand 506 km

Coastline: 4,675 km (Peninsular Malaysia 2,068 km, East Malaysia 2,607 km)

Maritime claims: *territorial sea:* 12 nm
exclusive economic zone: 200 nm
continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation; specified boundary in the South China Sea

Climate: tropical; annual southwest (April to October) and northeast (October to February) monsoons

Terrain: coastal plains rising to hills and mountains

Elevation extremes: *lowest point:* Indian Ocean 0 m
highest point: Gunung Kinabalu 4,100 m

Natural resources: tin, petroleum, timber, copper, iron ore, natural gas, bauxite

Land use: *arable land:* 5.48%
permanent crops: 17.61%
other: 76.91% (2001)

Irrigated land: 3,650 sq km (1998 est.)

Natural hazards: flooding, landslides, forest fires

Environment - current issues: air pollution from industrial and vehicular emissions; water pollution from raw sewage; deforestation; smoke/haze from Indonesian forest fires

Environment - international agreements: *party to:* Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Life Conservation, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands

Geography - note: strategic location along Strait of Malacca and southern South China Sea

People **Malaysia**

Population: 23,953,136 (July 2005 est.)

Age structure: *0-14 years:* 33% (male 4,067,006/female 3,837,758)
15-64 years: 62.4% (male 7,488,367/female 7,447,047)
65 years and over: 4.6% (male 490,334/female 622,624) (2005 est.)

Median age: *total:* 23.92 years

male: 23.32 years
female: 24.54 years (2005 est.)

- Population growth rate:** 1.8% (2005 est.)
- Birth rate:** 23.07 births/1,000 population (2005 est.)
- Death rate:** 5.06 deaths/1,000 population (2005 est.)
- Net migration rate:** 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population
note: does not reflect net flow of an unknown number of illegal immigrants from other countries in the region (2005 est.)
- Sex ratio:** *at birth: 1.07 male(s)/female*
under 15 years: 1.06 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 1.01 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.79 male(s)/female
total population: 1.01 male(s)/female (2005 est.)
- Infant mortality rate:** *total: 17.7 deaths/1,000 live births*
male: 20.49 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 14.71 deaths/1,000 live births (2005 est.)
- Life expectancy at birth:** *total population: 72.24 years*
male: 69.56 years
female: 75.11 years (2005 est.)
- Total fertility rate:** 3.07 children born/woman (2005 est.)
- HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:** 0.4% (2003 est.)
- HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:** 52,000 (2003 est.)
- HIV/AIDS - deaths:** 2,000 (2003 est.)
- Major infectious diseases:** *degree of risk: high*
food or waterborne diseases: bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever
vectorborne diseases: dengue fever and malaria are high risks in some locations (2004)
- Nationality:** *noun: Malaysian(s)*
adjective: Malaysian
- Ethnic groups:** Malay 50.4%, Chinese 23.7%, Indigenous 11%, Indian 7.1%, others 7.8% (2004 est.)
- Religions:** Muslim, Buddhist, Daoist, Hindu, Christian, Sikh; note - in addition, Shamanism is practiced in East Malaysia
- Languages:** Bahasa Melayu (official), English, Chinese dialects (Cantonese,

Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka, Hainan, Foochow), Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Panjabi, Thai
note: in addition, in East Malaysia several indigenous languages are spoken, the largest are Iban and Kadazan

Literacy: *definition:* age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 88.7%
male: 92%
female: 85.4% (2002)

Government **Malaysia**

Country name: *conventional long form:* none
conventional short form: Malaysia
former: Federation of Malaysia

Government type: constitutional monarchy
note: nominally headed by paramount ruler and a bicameral Parliament consisting of a nonelected upper house and an elected lower house; all Peninsular Malaysian states have hereditary rulers except Melaka and Pulau Pinang (Penang); those two states along with Sabah and Sarawak in East Malaysia have governors appointed by government; powers of state governments are limited by federal constitution; under terms of federation, Sabah and Sarawak retain certain constitutional prerogatives (e.g., right to maintain their own immigration controls); Sabah - holds 20 seats in House of Representatives and will hold 25 seats after the next election; Sarawak holds 28 seats in House of Representatives

Capital: Kuala Lumpur
note: Putrajaya is referred to as administrative center not capital; Parliament meets in Kuala Lumpur

Administrative divisions: 13 states (negeri-negeri, singular - negeri) Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Perlis, Pulau Pinang, Sabah, Sarawak, Selangor, and Terengganu; and one federal territory (wilayah persekutuan) with three components, city of Kuala Lumpur, Labuan, and Putrajaya

Independence: 31 August 1957 (from UK)

National holiday: Independence Day/Malaysia Day, 31 August (1957)

Constitution: 31 August 1957, amended 16 September 1963

Legal system: based on English common law; judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court at request of supreme head of the federation; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 21 years of age; universal

Executive branch: *chief of state:* Paramount Ruler Tuanku SYED SIRAJUDDIN ibni Almarhum Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail, the Raja of Perlis (since 12 December 2001)

head of government: Prime Minister ABDULLAH bin Ahmad Badawi (since 31 October 2003); Deputy Prime Minister Mohamed NAJIB bin Abdul Razak (since 7 January 2004)

cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the prime minister from among the members of Parliament with consent of the paramount ruler

elections: paramount ruler elected by and from the hereditary rulers of nine of the states for five-year terms; election last held 12 December 2001 (next to be held in 2006); prime minister designated from among the members of the House of Representatives; following legislative elections, the leader of the party that wins a plurality of seats in the House of Representatives becomes prime minister

election results: Tuanku SYED SIRAJUDDIN ibni Almarhum Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail elected paramount ruler

Legislative branch: bicameral Parliament or Parlimen consists of the Senate or Dewan Negara (70 seats; 44 appointed by the paramount ruler, 26 appointed by the state legislatures) and the House of Representatives or Dewan Rakyat (219 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms)
elections: House of Representatives - last held 21 March 2004 (next must be held by 2009)
election results: House of Representatives - percent of vote by party - BN 91%, DAP 5%, PAS 3%, other 1%; seats by party - BN 199, DAP 12, PAS 6, PKR 1, independent 1

Judicial branch: Federal Court (judges appointed by the paramount ruler on the advice of the prime minister)

Political parties and leaders: ruling-coalition National Front (Barisan Nasional) or BN, consisting of the following parties: Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia Party or PGRM [LIM Keng Yaik]; Liberal Democratic Party (Parti Liberal Demokratik - Sabah) or LDP [CHONG Kah Kiat]; Malaysian Chinese Association (Persatuan China Malaysia) or MCA [ONG Ka Ting]; Malaysian Indian Congress (Kongresi India Malaysia) or MIC [S. Samy VELLU]; Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah or PBRS [Joseph KURUP]; Parti Bersatu Sabah or PBS [Joseph PAIRIN Kitingan]; Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu or PBB [Patinggi Haji Abdul TAIB Mahmud]; Parti Rakyat Sarawak or PRS [James MASING]; Sabah Progressive Party (Parti Progresif Sabah) or SAPP [YONG Teck Lee]; Sarawak United People's Party (Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sarawak) or SUPP [George CHAN Hong Nam]; United Malays National Organization or UMNO [ABDULLAH bin Ahmad Badawi]; United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organization (Pertubuhan Pasko Momogun Kadazan Dusun Bersatu) or UPKO [Bernard DOMPOK]; People's Progressive Party (Parti Progresif Penduduk Malaysia) or PPP [M.Keyveas]; Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party or SPDP [William MAWANI]; opposition parties: Democratic Action Party (Parti Tindakan Demokratik) or DAP [KARPAL Singh]; Islamic Party of Malaysia (Parti Islam se Malaysia) or PAS [Abdul HADI Awang]; People's Justice Party (Parti Keadilan Rakyat) or PKR [WAN AZIZAH Wan Ismael]; Sarawak National Party or SNAP [Edwin DANDUNG]; opposition coalition Alternative Front (Barisan Alternatif) or BA consists of PAS and PKR

Political pressure groups and leaders: NA

International organization participation: ABEDA, APEC, APT, ARF, AsDB, ASEAN, BIS, C, CP, FAO, G-15, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICFTU, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRC, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, ISO, ITU, MIGA, MINURSO, MONUC, NAM, OIC, ONUB, OPCW, PCA, UN, UNAMSIL, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNMEE, UNMIK, UNMIL, UNMIS, UPU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US: *chief of mission:* Ambassador GHAZZALI bin Sheikh Abdul Khalid
chancery: 3516 International Court NW, Washington, DC 20008
telephone: [1] (202) 572-9700
FAX: [1] (202) 572-9882
consulate(s) general: Los Angeles and New York

Diplomatic representation from the US: *chief of mission:* Ambassador Christopher J. LAFLEUR
embassy: 376 Jalan Tun Razak, 50400 Kuala Lumpur
mailing address: P. O. Box No. 10035, 50700 Kuala Lumpur; American Embassy Kuala Lumpur, APO AP 96535-8152
telephone: [60] (3) 2168-5000
FAX: [60] (3) 2142-2207

Flag description: 14 equal horizontal stripes of red (top) alternating with white (bottom); there is a blue rectangle in the upper hoist-side corner bearing a yellow crescent and a yellow 14-pointed star; the crescent and the star are traditional symbols of Islam; the design was based on the flag of the US

Economy **Malaysia**

Economy - overview: Malaysia, a middle-income country, transformed itself from 1971 through the late 1990's from a producer of raw materials into an emerging multi-sector economy. Growth was almost exclusively driven by exports - particularly of electronics. As a result, Malaysia was hard hit by the global economic downturn and the slump in the information technology (IT) sector in 2001 and 2002. GDP in 2001 grew only 0.5% due to an estimated 11% contraction in exports, but a substantial fiscal stimulus package equal to US \$1.9 billion mitigated the worst of the recession and the economy rebounded in 2002 with a 4.1% increase. The economy grew 4.9% in 2003, notwithstanding a difficult first half, when external pressures from SARS and the Iraq War led to caution in the business community. Growth topped 7% in 2004. Healthy foreign exchange reserves, low inflation, and a small external debt are all strengths that make it unlikely that Malaysia will experience a financial crisis similar to the one in 1997. The economy remains dependent on continued growth in the US, China, and Japan, top export destinations and key sources of foreign investment.

GDP (purchasing \$229.3 billion (2004 est.)

power parity):	
GDP - real growth rate:	7.1% (2004 est.)
GDP - per capita:	purchasing power parity - \$9,700 (2004 est.)
GDP - composition by sector:	<i>agriculture: 7.2%</i> <i>industry: 33.6%</i> <i>services: 59.1% (2004 est.)</i>
Labor force:	10.49 million (2004 est.)
Labor force - by occupation:	agriculture 14.5%, industry 36%, services 49.5% (2000 est.)
Unemployment rate:	3% (2004 est.)
Population below poverty line:	8% (1998 est.)
Household income or consumption by percentage share:	<i>lowest 10%: 1.4%</i> <i>highest 10%: 39.2% (2003 est.)</i>
Distribution of family income - Gini index:	49.2 (1997)
Inflation rate (consumer prices):	1.3% (2004 est.)
Investment (gross fixed):	21.7% of GDP (2004 est.)
Budget:	<i>revenues: \$25.33 billion</i> <i>expenditures: \$29.33 billion, including capital expenditures of \$9.4 billion (2004 est.)</i>
Public debt:	45.4% of GDP (2004 est.)
Agriculture - products:	Peninsular Malaysia - rubber, palm oil, cocoa, rice; Sabah - subsistence crops, rubber, timber, coconuts, rice; Sarawak - rubber, pepper, timber
Industries:	Peninsular Malaysia - rubber and oil palm processing and manufacturing, light manufacturing industry, electronics, tin mining and smelting, logging and processing timber; Sabah - logging, petroleum production; Sarawak - agriculture processing, petroleum production and refining, logging
Industrial production growth rate:	10.2% (2004 est.)

Electricity - production: 75.33 billion kWh (2002)

Electricity - production by source: *fossil fuel:* 89.5%
hydro: 10.5%
nuclear: 0%
other: 0% (2001)

Electricity - consumption: 68.4 billion kWh (2002)

Electricity - exports: 70 million kWh (2002)

Electricity - imports: 0 kWh (2002)

Oil - production: 785,000 bbl/day (2004 est.)

Oil - consumption: 460,000 bbl/day (2003 est.)

Oil - exports: 230,200 bbl/day (2003)

Oil - imports: NA

Oil - proved reserves: 3.2 billion bbl (2004 est.)

Natural gas - production: 53.66 billion cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - consumption: 31.25 billion cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - exports: 22.41 billion cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - imports: 0 cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - proved reserves: 2.23 trillion cu m (2004)

Current account balance: \$11.81 billion (2004 est.)

Exports: \$123.5 billion f.o.b. (2004 est.)

Exports - commodities: electronic equipment, petroleum and liquefied natural gas, wood and wood products, palm oil, rubber, textiles, chemicals

Exports - partners: US 18.8%, Singapore 15%, Japan 10.1%, China 6.7%, Hong Kong 6%, Thailand 4.8% (2004)

Imports: \$99.3 billion f.o.b. (2004 est.)

Imports - commodities: electronics, machinery, petroleum products, plastics, vehicles, iron and steel products, chemicals

Imports - partners: Japan 16.1%, US 14.6%, Singapore 11.2%, China 9.9%, Thailand 5.6%, Taiwan 5.5%, South Korea 5%, Germany 4.5%, Indonesia 4% (2004)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold: \$55.27 billion (2004 est.)

Debt - external: \$53.36 billion (2004 est.)

Currency (code): ringgit (MYR)

Currency code: MYR

Exchange rates: ringgits per US dollar - 3.8 (2004), 3.8 (2003), 3.8 (2002), 3.8 (2001), 3.8 (2000)

Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications Malaysia

Telephones - main lines in use: 4,571,600 (2003)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 11,124,100 (2003)

Telephone system: *general assessment:* modern system; international service excellent
domestic: good intercity service provided on Peninsular Malaysia mainly by microwave radio relay; adequate intercity microwave radio relay network between Sabah and Sarawak via Brunei; domestic satellite system with 2 earth stations
international: country code - 60; submarine cables to India, Hong Kong, and Singapore; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (1 Indian Ocean and 1 Pacific Ocean) (2001)

Radio broadcast stations: AM 35, FM 391, shortwave 15 (2001)

Radios: 10.9 million (1999)

Television broadcast stations: 1 (plus 15 high-power repeaters) (2001)

Televisions: 10.8 million (1999)

Internet country code: .my

Internet hosts: 107,971 (2003)

Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 7 (2000)

Internet users: 8,692,100 (2003)

Transportation Malaysia

Railways: *total:* 1,890 km (207 km electrified)
standard gauge: 57 km 1.435-m gauge (57 km electrified)
narrow gauge: 1,833 km 1.000-m gauge (150 km electrified) (2004)

Highways: *total:* 65,877 km
paved: 51,318 km
unpaved: 14,559 km (2001)

Waterways: 7,200 km
note: Peninsular Malaysia 3,200 km, Sabah 1,500 km, Sarawak 2,500 km (2004)

Pipelines: condensate 279 km; gas 5,047 km; oil 1,841 km; refined products 114 km (2004)

Ports and harbors: Bintulu, Johor, Labuan, Lahad Datu, Lumut, Miri, George Town (Penang), Port Kelang, Tanjung Pelepas

Merchant marine: *total:* 346 ships (1,000 GRT or over) 5,389,397 GRT/7,539,178 DWT
by type: bulk carrier 45, cargo 109, chemical tanker 38, container 47, liquefied gas 26, livestock carrier 1, passenger 1, passenger/cargo 6, petroleum tanker 62, roll on/roll off 6, vehicle carrier 5
foreign-owned: 77 (China 1, Hong Kong 12, Japan 3, Singapore 61)
registered in other countries: 59 (2005)

Airports: 117 (2004 est.)

Airports - with paved runways: *total:* 38
over 3,047 m: 5
2,438 to 3,047 m: 7
1,524 to 2,437 m: 10
914 to 1,523 m: 9
under 914 m: 7 (2004 est.)

Airports - with unpaved runways: *total:* 79
1,524 to 2,437 m: 1
914 to 1,523 m: 6
under 914 m: 72 (2004 est.)

Heliports: 1 (2004 est.)

Military Malaysia

Military branches: Malaysian Army (Tentera Darat Malaysia), Royal Malaysian Navy (Tentera Laut Diraja Malaysia, TLDM), Royal Malaysian Air Force (Tentera Udara Diraja Malaysia, TUDM) (2005)

Military manpower - military age and obligation: 18 years of age for voluntary military service (2005)

Military manpower - availability:	<i>males age 18-49: 5,584,231 (2005 est.)</i>
Military manpower - fit for military service:	<i>males age 18-49: 4,574,854 (2005 est.)</i>
Military manpower - reaching military age annually:	<i>males: 244,418 (2005 est.)</i>
Military expenditures - dollar figure:	\$1.69 billion (FY00 est.)
Military expenditures - percent of GDP:	2.03% (FY00)

Transnational Issues

Malaysia

- Disputes - international:** Malaysia has asserted sovereignty over the Spratly Islands together with China, Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, and possibly Brunei; while the 2002 "Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea" has eased tensions over the Spratly Islands, it is not the legally binding "code of conduct" sought by some parties; Malaysia was not party to the March 2005 joint accord among the national oil companies of China, the Philippines, and Vietnam on conducting marine seismic activities in the Spratly Islands; disputes continue over deliveries of fresh water to Singapore, Singapore's land reclamation, bridge construction, maritime boundaries, and Pedra Branca Island/Pulau Batu Putih - but parties agree to ICJ arbitration on island dispute within three years; ICJ awarded Ligitan and Sipadan islands, also claimed by Indonesia and Philippines, to Malaysia but left maritime boundary in the hydrocarbon-rich Celebes Sea in dispute, culminating in hostile confrontations in March 2005 over concessions to the Ambalat oil block; separatist violence in Thailand's predominantly Muslim southern provinces prompts measures to close and monitor border with Malaysia to stem terrorist activities; Philippines retains a now dormant claim to Malaysia's Sabah State in northern Borneo; in 2003, Brunei and Malaysia ceased gas and oil exploration in their disputed offshore and deepwater seabeds and negotiations have stalemated prompting consideration of international adjudication; Malaysia's land boundary with Brunei around Limbang is in dispute; piracy remains a problem in the Malacca Strait
- Illicit drugs:** transit point for some illicit drugs; drug trafficking prosecuted vigorously and carries severe penalties

This page was last updated on 4 October, 2005

