

Malaysia

Coordinates: 2°N 112°E﻿ / ﻿

Malaysia (/ˈməˈleɪziə, -ʒə/ (listen) *mə-LAY-zee-ə*, -*zhə*; Malay: [malejsia]) is a country in Southeast Asia. The federal constitutional monarchy consists of thirteen states and three federal territories, separated by the South China Sea into two regions: Peninsular Malaysia and Borneo's East Malaysia. Peninsular Malaysia shares a land and maritime border with Thailand and maritime borders with Singapore, Vietnam, and Indonesia. East Malaysia shares land and maritime borders with Brunei and Indonesia, and a maritime border with the Philippines and Vietnam. Kuala Lumpur is the national capital, the country's largest city, and the seat of the legislative branch of the federal government. Putrajaya is the administrative centre, which represents the seat of both the executive branch (the Cabinet, federal ministries, and agencies) and the judicial branch of the federal government. With a population of over 32 million, Malaysia is the world's 45th-most populous country. The southernmost point of continental Eurasia is in Tanjung Piai. Located in the tropics, Malaysia is one of 17 megadiverse countries, home to numerous endemic species.


Malaysia has its origins in the Malay kingdoms, which, from the 18th century on, became subject to the British Empire, along with the British Straits Settlements protectorate. During World War Two, British Malaya, along with other nearby British and American colonies, was occupied by the Empire of Japan.^[13] Following three years of occupation, peninsular Malaysia was unified as the Malayan Union in 1946 and then restructured as the Federation of Malaya in 1948. The country achieved independence on 31 August 1957. The independent Malaya united with the then British crown colonies of North Borneo, Sarawak, and Singapore on 16 September 1963 to become Malaysia. In August 1965, Singapore was expelled from the federation and became a separate independent country.^[14]

The country is multiethnic and multicultural, which has a significant effect on its politics. About half the population is ethnically Malay, with minorities of Chinese, Indians, and indigenous peoples. The country's official language is Malaysian Malay, a standard form of the Malay language. English remains an active second language. While recognising Islam as the country's established religion, the constitution grants freedom of religion to non-Muslims. The government is modelled on the Westminster parliamentary system, and the legal system is based on common law. The head of state is an elected monarch, chosen from among the nine state sultans every five years. The head of government is the Prime Minister.

After independence, the Malaysian GDP grew at an average rate of 6.5% per annum for almost 50 years. The economy has traditionally been fuelled by its natural resources but is expanding in the sectors of science, tourism, commerce and medical tourism. Malaysia has a newly industrialised market economy, ranked third-largest in

Malaysia





Flag

Coat of arms

Motto: *Bersekutu Bertambah Mutu*^[1]

برسكوتو برتambah موتو (Jawi)

"Unity is Strength"

Anthem: *Negaraku*

"My Country"

1:25



☒ Show globe

☐ Show map of Southeast Asia

☐ Show all

Location of Malaysia (dark green)

Southeast Asia and 36th-largest in the world.^[15] It is a founding member of ASEAN, EAS, and OIC and a member of APEC, the Commonwealth, and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Etymology



Malaysia used as a label for the Malay Archipelago on a 1914 map from a United States atlas

The name *Malaysia* is a combination of the word *Malays* and the Latin-Greek suffix *-ia/-ia*^[16] which can be translated as 'land of the Malays'.^[17] The origin of the word *Melayu* is subject to various theories. It may derive from the Sanskrit *Himalaya*, referring to areas high in the mountains, or *Malaiyur-pura*, meaning 'mountain town'.^[18] Another similar theory claims its origin lies in the Tamil words *malai* and *ur* meaning 'mountain' and 'city, land', respectively.^{[19][20][21]} Another suggestion is that it derives from the Pamalayu campaign. A final suggestion is that it comes from a Javanese word meaning 'to run', from which a river, the Sungai Melayu ('Melayu river'), was named due to its strong current.^[18] Similar-sounding variants have also appeared in accounts older than the 11th century, as toponyms for areas in

Sumatra or referring to a larger region around the Strait of Malacca.^[22] The Sanskrit text *Vayu Purana*, thought to have been in existence since the first millennium CE, mentioned a land named 'Malayadvipa' which was identified by certain scholars as the modern Malay peninsula.^{[23][24][25][26][27]} Other notable accounts are by the 2nd-century Ptolemy's *Geographia* that used the name *Malayu Kulon* for the west coast of Golden Chersonese, and the 7th-century Yijing's account of *Malayu*.^[22]

At some point, the Melayu Kingdom took its name from the *Sungai Melayu*.^{[18][28]} *Melayu* then became associated with Srivijaya,^[22] and remained associated with various parts of Sumatra, especially Palembang, where the founder of the Malacca Sultanate is thought to have come from.^[29] It is only thought to have developed into an ethnonym as Malacca became a regional power in the 15th century. Islamisation established an ethnoreligious identity in Malacca, with the term *Melayu* beginning to appear as interchangeable with *Melakans*. It may have specifically referred to local Malays speakers thought loyal to the Malaccan Sultan. The initial Portuguese use of *Malayos* reflected this, referring only to the ruling people of Malacca. The prominence of traders from Malacca led *Melayu* to be associated with Muslim traders, and from there became associated with the wider cultural and linguistic group.^[22] Malacca and later Johor claimed they were the centre of Malay culture, a position supported by the British which led to the term *Malay* becoming more usually linked to the Malay peninsula rather than Sumatra.^[29]

Before the onset of European colonisation, the Malay Peninsula was known natively as *Tanah Melayu* ('Malay Land').^[30] Under a racial classification created by a German scholar Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, the natives of maritime Southeast Asia were grouped into a single category, the Malay race.^{[31][32]} Following the expedition of French navigator Jules Dumont d'Urville to Oceania in 1826, he later proposed the terms of *Malaysia*, *Micronesia* and *Melanesia* to the *Société de Géographie* in 1831, distinguishing these Pacific cultures and island

<div> <div><div>– in <u>Asia</u> (dark gray & white)</div></div> <div><div>– in <u>ASEAN</u> (dark gray)</div></div> </div>	
Capital <div>and largest city</div>	Kuala Lumpur ^{[fn 1]} 3°8′N 101°41′E
Administrative center	Putrajaya ^{[fn 2]} 2°56′N 101°42′E
Official languages	Malay ^{[a][b][c]}
Recognised language	English ^{[c]}
Ethnic groups <div> (2021)^{[2] [3]}</div>	<div> <div>69.7% Bumiputera</div> <div> <div><div>– 57.3% Malay</div></div> <div>– 12.4% indigenous groups of Sabah, Sarawak and Orang Asli</div> </div> <div>22.9% Chinese</div> <div>6.6% Indian</div> <div>0.8% other</div> </div>
Religion (2020)^{[5]}	<div> <div>63.5% <u>Sunni Islam</u> (official)^{[4]}</div> <div>18.7% <u>Buddhism</u></div> <div>9.1% <u>Christianity</u></div> <div>6.1% <u>Hinduism</u></div> <div>0.9% other</div> <div>1.8% unknown</div> </div>
Demonym(s)	Malaysian
Government	Federal parliamentary constitutional elective monarchy
<div>• Monarch </div>	Abdullah