

:: Malaysia¹



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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 a Communist insurgency, Indonesian confrontation with Malaysia, Philippine claims to Sabah, and Singapore's secession from the Federation in 1965. During the 22-year term of Prime Minister MAHATHIR bin Mohamad (1981-2003), Malaysia was successful in diversifying its economy from dependence on exports of raw materials to expansion in manufacturing, services, and tourism. Current Prime Minister Mohamed NAJIB bin Abdul Razak (in office since April 2009) has continued these pro-business policies.

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

Area:

total: 329,847 sq km

country comparison to the world: [67](#)

land: 328,657 sq km

¹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

water: 1,190 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: 5.46%

permanent crops: 17.54%

other: 77% (2005)

Irrigated land:

3,650 sq km (2008)

Total renewable water resources:

580 cu km (1999)

Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):

total: 9.02 cu km/yr (17%/21%/62%)

per capita: 356 cu m/yr (2000)

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

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

strategic location along Strait of Malacca and southern South China Sea

Government type:

constitutional monarchy

note: nominally headed by paramount ruler (commonly referred to as the King) and a bicameral Parliament consisting of a nonelected upper house and an elected lower house; all Peninsular Malaysian states have hereditary rulers (commonly referred to as sultans) 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)

Capital:

name: Kuala Lumpur

geographic coordinates: 3 10 N, 101 42 E

time difference: UTC+8 (13 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

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, Terengganu; and 1 federal territory (Wilayah Persekutuan) with three components, city of Kuala Lumpur, Labuan, and Putrajaya

Independence:

31 August 1957 (from the UK)

National holiday:

Independence Day 31 August (1957) (independence of Malaya); Malaysia Day 16 September (1963) (formation of Malaysia)

Constitution:

31 August 1957; amended many times the latest in 2007

Legal system:

mixed legal system of English common law, Islamic law, and customary law; judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court at request of supreme head of the federation

International law organization participation:

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; non-party state to the ICCt

Suffrage:

21 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: King - Tuanku Abdul HALIM Mu'adzam Shah (since 13 December 2011); the position of the king is primarily ceremonial

head of government: Prime Minister Mohamed NAJIB bin Abdul Razak (since 3 April 2009); Deputy Prime Minister MUHYIDDIN bin Mohamed Yassin (since 9 April 2009)

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

(For more information visit the [World Leaders website](#) )

elections: kings elected by and from the hereditary rulers of nine of the states for five-year terms; selection based on principle of rotation among rulers of states; election last held on 14 October 2011 (next to be held in 2016); prime minister designated from among the members of the House of Representatives; following legislative elections, the leader who commands the support of the majority of members in the House becomes prime minister (since independence this has been the leader of the UMNO party)

election results: Tuanku Abdul HALIM Mu'adzam Shah elected king

Legislative branch:

bicameral Parliament or Parlimen consists of Senate or Dewan Negara (70 seats; 44 members appointed by the king, 26 elected by 13 state legislatures to serve three-year terms with a two term limit) and House of Representatives or Dewan Rakyat (222 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve up to five-year terms)

elections: House of Representatives - last held on 8 March 2008 (next to be held by June 2013)

election results: House of Representatives - percent of vote - BN coalition 50.3%, opposition parties 46.8%, others 2.9%; seats - BN coalition 140, opposition parties 82; (seats by party as of March 2011 - BN coalition 137, opposition parties 76, independents 9)

Judicial branch:

civil courts include Federal Court, Court of Appeal, High Court of Malaya on peninsula Malaysia, and High Court of Sabah and Sarawak in states of Borneo (judges are appointed by the king on the advice of the prime minister); sharia courts include Sharia Appeal Court, Sharia High Court, and Sharia Subordinate Courts at state-level and deal with religious and family matters such as custody, divorce, and inheritance only for Muslims; decisions of sharia courts cannot be appealed to civil courts

Political parties and leaders:

National Front (Barisan Nasional) or BN (ruling coalition) consists of the following parties: Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia Party or PGRM [KOH Tsu Koon]; Liberal Democratic Party (Parti Liberal Demokratik - Sabah) or LDP [LIEW Vui Keong]; Malaysian Chinese Association (Persatuan China Malaysia) or MCA [CHUA Soi Lek]; Malaysian Indian Congress (Kongres India Malaysia) or MIC [Govindasamy PALANIVEL]; Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah or PBRS [Joseph KURUP]; Parti Bersatu Sabah or PBS [Joseph PAIRIN Kitingan]; Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu or PBB [Abdul TAIB Mahmud]; Parti Rakyat Sarawak or PRS [James MASING]; Sarawak United People's Party (Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sarawak) or SUPP [George

CHAN Hong Nam]; United Malays National Organization or UMNO [NAJIB bin Abdul Razak]; 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.Kayveas]; Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party or SPDP [William MAWAN]

People's Alliance (Pakatan Rakyat) or PR (opposition coalition) consists of the following 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 Ismail]; Sarawak National Party or SNAP [Edwin DUNDANG]

independent party: Sabah Progressive Party (Parti Progresif Saban) or SAPP [YONG Teck Lee]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

Bar Council; BERSIH (electoral reform coalition); PEMBELA (Muslim NGO coalition); PERKASA (defense of Malay rights)

other: religious groups; women's groups; youth groups

International organization participation:

ADB, APEC, ARF, ASEAN, BIS, C, CICA (observer), CP, D-8, EAS, FAO, G-15, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC, MIGA, MINURSO, MONUSCO, NAM, OIC, OPCW, PCA, PIF (partner), UN, UNAMID, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNIFIL, UNMIL, UNMISS, UNMIT, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Economy - overview:

Malaysia, a middle-income country, has transformed itself since the 1970s from a producer of raw materials into an emerging multi-sector economy. Under current Prime Minister NAJIB, Malaysia is attempting to achieve high-income status by 2020 and to move farther up the value-added production chain by attracting investments in Islamic finance, high technology industries, biotechnology, and services. The NAJIB administration also is continuing efforts to boost domestic demand and reduce the economy's dependence on exports. Nevertheless, exports - particularly of electronics, oil and gas, palm oil and rubber - remain a significant driver of the economy. As an oil and gas exporter, Malaysia has profited from higher world energy prices, although the rising cost of domestic gasoline and diesel fuel, combined with strained government finances, has forced Kuala Lumpur begin to reduce government subsidies. The government is also trying to lessen its dependence on state oil producer Petronas, which supplies more than 40% of government revenue. The central bank maintains healthy foreign exchange reserves and its well-developed regulatory regime has limited Malaysia's exposure to riskier financial instruments and the global financial crisis. Nevertheless, Malaysia could be vulnerable to a fall in commodity prices or a general slowdown in global economic activity because exports are a major component of GDP. In order to attract increased investment, NAJIB has raised possible revisions to the special economic and social preferences accorded to ethnic Malays under the New Economic Policy of 1970, but he has encountered significant opposition, especially from Malay nationalists and other vested interests.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$447 billion (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [30](#)

\$424.8 billion (2010 est.)
\$396.4 billion (2009 est.)
note: data are in 2011 US dollars

[GDP \(official exchange rate\):](#)

\$247.6 billion (2011 est.)

[GDP - real growth rate:](#)

5.2% (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: [69](#)
7.2% (2010 est.)
-1.6% (2009 est.)

[GDP - per capita \(PPP\):](#)

\$15,600 (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: [77](#)
\$15,000 (2010 est.)
\$14,200 (2009 est.)
note: data are in 2011 US dollars

[GDP - composition by sector:](#)

agriculture: 10.2%
industry: 42.1%
services: 47.8% (2011 est.)

[Labor force:](#)

11.9 million (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: [44](#)

[Labor force - by occupation:](#)

agriculture: 13%
industry: 36%
services: 51% (2005 est.)

[Unemployment rate:](#)

3.1% (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: [27](#)
3.4% (2010 est.)

[Population below poverty line:](#)

3.6% (2007 est.)

[Household income or consumption by percentage share:](#)

lowest 10%: 1.8%
highest 10%: 34.7% (2009 est.)

[Distribution of family income - Gini index:](#)

46.2 (2009)
country comparison to the world: [34](#)
49.2 (1997)

Investment (gross fixed):

20.3% of GDP (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [115](#)

Budget:

revenues: \$56.02 billion

expenditures: \$75.45 billion (2011 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

22.6% of GDP (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [134](#)

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-7.8% of GDP (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [185](#)

Public debt:

57.9% of GDP (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [42](#)

53.1% of GDP (2010 est.)

note:

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

3.3% (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [62](#)

1.7% (2010 est.)

note: approximately 30% of goods are price-controlled

Central bank discount rate:

2.83% (31 December 2010)

country comparison to the world: [110](#)

2% (31 December 2009 est.)

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

5.1% (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [161](#)

5.05% (31 December 2010 est.)

Stock of narrow money:

\$82.72 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [37](#)

\$72.77 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

Stock of broad money:

\$378.3 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [25](#)

\$358.1 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

Stock of domestic credit:

\$362.1 billion (31 December 2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: [32](#)
\$328.4 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

Market value of publicly traded shares:

\$410.5 billion (31 December 2010)
country comparison to the world: [26](#)
\$256 billion (31 December 2009)
\$187.1 billion (31 December 2008)

Agriculture - products:

Peninsular Malaysia - rubber, palm oil, cocoa, rice; Sabah - subsistence crops, coconuts, rice; rubber, timber; Sarawak - rubber, timber; pepper

Industries:

Peninsular Malaysia - rubber and oil palm processing and manufacturing, light manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, medical technology, electronics, tin mining and smelting, logging, timber processing; Sabah - logging, petroleum production; Sarawak - agriculture processing, petroleum production and refining, logging

Industrial production growth rate:

2.4% (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: [119](#)

Electricity - production:

101.1 billion kWh (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [32](#)

Electricity - consumption:

93.8 billion kWh (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [31](#)

Electricity - exports:

91.7 million kWh (2009 est.)

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2009 est.)

Oil - production:

664,800 bbl/day (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: [28](#)

Oil - consumption:

561,000 bbl/day (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: [31](#)

Oil - exports:

644,900 bbl/day (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [26](#)

Oil - imports:

355,300 bbl/day (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [30](#)

[Natural gas - production:](#)

58.6 billion cu m (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [16](#)

[Natural gas - consumption:](#)

29.07 billion cu m (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [28](#)

[Natural gas - exports:](#)

30.79 billion cu m (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [10](#)

[Natural gas - imports:](#)

1.269 billion cu m (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: [56](#)

[Natural gas - proved reserves:](#)

2.35 trillion cu m (1 January 2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: [15](#)

[Current account balance:](#)

\$32.99 billion (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: [16](#)
\$32.19 billion (2010 est.)

[Exports:](#)

\$212.7 billion (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: [26](#)
\$197 billion (2010 est.)

[Exports - commodities:](#)

electronic equipment, petroleum and liquefied natural gas, wood and wood products, palm oil, rubber, textiles, chemicals

[Exports - partners:](#)

Singapore 13.4%, China 12.6%, Japan 10.4%, US 9.5%, Thailand 5.3%, Hong Kong 5.1% (2010 est.)

[Imports:](#)

\$168 billion (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: [30](#)
\$152.6 billion (2010 est.)

[Imports - commodities:](#)

electronics, machinery, petroleum products, plastics, vehicles, iron and steel products, chemicals

[Imports - partners:](#)

China 12.6%, Japan 12.6%, Singapore 11.4%, US 10.7%, Thailand 6.2%, Indonesia 5.6% (2010

est.)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$129.6 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [20](#)

\$106.5 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

Debt - external:

\$78.18 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [49](#)

\$70.18 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:

\$82.99 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [42](#)

\$77.44 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:

\$90.15 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: [27](#)

\$82.65 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

Exchange rates:

ringgits (MYR) per US dollar -

3.006 (2011 est.)

3.22 (2010 est.)

3.52 (2009)

3.33 (2008)

3.46 (2007)

Telephones - main lines in use:

4.573 million (2010)

country comparison to the world: [33](#)

Telephones - mobile cellular:

34.456 million (2010)

country comparison to the world: [30](#)

Telephone system:

general assessment: modern system featuring good intercity service on Peninsular Malaysia provided mainly by microwave radio relay and an adequate intercity microwave radio relay network between Sabah and Sarawak via Brunei; international service excellent

domestic: domestic satellite system with 2 earth stations; combined fixed-line and mobile-cellular teledensity 150 per 100 persons

international: country code - 60; landing point for several major international submarine cable networks that provide connectivity to Asia, Middle East, and Europe; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (1 Indian Ocean, 1 Pacific Ocean) (2008)

Broadcast media:

state-owned television broadcaster operates 2 TV networks with relays throughout the country, and

the leading private commercial media group operates 4 TV stations with numerous relays throughout the country; satellite TV subscription service is available; state-owned radio broadcaster operates multiple national networks as well as regional and local stations; large number of private commercial radio broadcasters and some subscription satellite radio services are available; about 400 radio stations overall (2008)

[Internet country code:](#)

.my

[Internet hosts:](#)

344,452 (2010)

country comparison to the world: [56](#)

[Internet users:](#)

15.355 million (2009)

country comparison to the world: [26](#)

[Airports:](#)

118 (2010)

country comparison to the world: [50](#)

[Airports - with paved runways:](#)

total: 38

over 3,047 m: 7

2,438 to 3,047 m: 10

1,524 to 2,437 m: 6

914 to 1,523 m: 8

under 914 m: 7 (2010)

[Airports - with unpaved runways:](#)

total: 80

914 to 1,523 m: 7

under 914 m: 73 (2010)

[Heliports:](#)

3 (2010)

[Pipelines:](#)

condensate 3 km; gas 1,757 km; liquid petroleum gas 155 km; oil 30 km; refined products 114 km (2010)

[Railways:](#)

total: 1,849 km

country comparison to the world: [75](#)

standard gauge: 57 km 1.435-m gauge (57 km electrified)

narrow gauge: 1,792 km 1.000-m gauge (150 km electrified) (2010)

[Roadways:](#)

total: 98,721 km

country comparison to the world: [43](#)

paved: 80,280 km (includes 1,821 km of expressways)
unpaved: 18,441 km (2004)

Waterways:

7,200 km (Peninsular Malaysia 3,200 km; Sabah 1,500 km; Sarawak 2,500 km) (2011)
country comparison to the world: [20](#)

Merchant marine:

total: 321

country comparison to the world: [30](#)

by type: bulk carrier 9, cargo 97, carrier 2, chemical tanker 45, container 44, liquefied gas 35, passenger/cargo 4, petroleum tanker 79, roll on/roll off 2, vehicle carrier 4

foreign-owned: 35 (Denmark 1, Hong Kong 8, Japan 4, Nigeria 1, Russia 2, Singapore 19)

registered in other countries: 79 (Bahamas 13, India 1, Indonesia 1, Malta 1, Marshall Islands 11, Panama 12, Papua New Guinea 1, Philippines 1, Saint Kitts and Nevis 1, Sierra Leone 1, Singapore 27, Thailand 3, Tuvalu 1, US 2, unknown 3) (2010)

Ports and terminals:

Bintulu, Johor Bahru, George Town (Penang), Port Kelang (Port Klang), Tanjung Pelepas

Transportation - note:

the International Maritime Bureau reports that the territorial and offshore waters in the Strait of Malacca and South China Sea remain high risk for piracy and armed robbery against ships; in the past, commercial vessels have been attacked and hijacked both at anchor and while underway; hijacked vessels are often disguised and cargo diverted to ports in East Asia; crews have been murdered or cast adrift; increased naval patrols since 2005 in the Strait of Malacca resulted in no reported incidents in 2010

Refugees and internally displaced persons:

refugees (country of origin): 15,174 (Indonesia); 21,544 (Burma) (2007)