

Malaysia

Country name	Malaysia
State title	Malaysia
Official language(s)	Malay (msa) ¹
Country name in official language(s)	Malaysia مليسيا
Script	Malay is written in <i>Rumi</i> (Roman-script) or <i>Jawi</i> (modified Arabic-script) ²
Romanization System	<i>Not required</i>
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	MY/MYS
Capital	Kuala Lumpur ³

Introduction

Malaysia is separated into two similarly sized regions: Peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia) and Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan (Malaysian Borneo or East Malaysia)⁴. Malaysia is a federation of partially self-governing states and territories under a central government. It comprises 13 states (Malay: *negeri*) and three federal territories (Malay: *wilayah persekutuan*). British Malaya was the name for the group of states on the Malay Peninsula and the island of Singapore that were under British control during the 18th to 20th centuries. The Federation of Malaya was established in 1948 and became an independent nation on 31st August 1957. In 1963 Malaysia was formed from the Singapore, North Borneo and Sarawak Crown Colonies. Singapore separated from Malaysia to become an independent state on 9 August 1965⁵.

Geographical names policy

Geographical names should be taken as found on official Malaysian-produced Roman-script sources. The main sources for geographical names are topographic maps published by the Department of Survey and Mapping of Malaysia (JUPEM)⁶. The Malaysian National Committee on Geographical Names (MNCNGN) is responsible for geographical naming activities in Malaysia. They maintain the Malaysian Geographic Names and Web Gazetteer Application (MyGeoName)⁷. It stores authoritative Roman-script geographical names and their locations across the country.

¹ It is called *Bahasa Malaysia* ("Malaysian language") or *Bahasa Melayu* ("Malay language") in Malay. Language codes given in this Factfile are ISO-639 codes.

² Historically, Malay has been written using various scripts. The modified Arabic script *Jawi* is used to write Malay for religious, cultural and some administrative purposes but has largely been replaced by the Roman script.

³ Due to congestion in Kuala Lumpur, the seat of government was moved to the new city of Putrajaya in 1999 (construction began about 25km south of Kuala Lumpur in 1995). Kuala Lumpur remains the country's capital, the seat of the King and Parliament and the principal financial and commercial centre, with Putrajaya in the process of becoming the administrative centre of the federal government.

⁴ The official names Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan are commonly used in Malaysia to avoid East Malaysia and West Malaysia being confused as two separate countries.

⁵ <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/malaysia/history>

⁶ <https://www.jupem.gov.my>

⁷ <http://mygeoname.mygeoportal.gov.my/index.jsp>

Languages

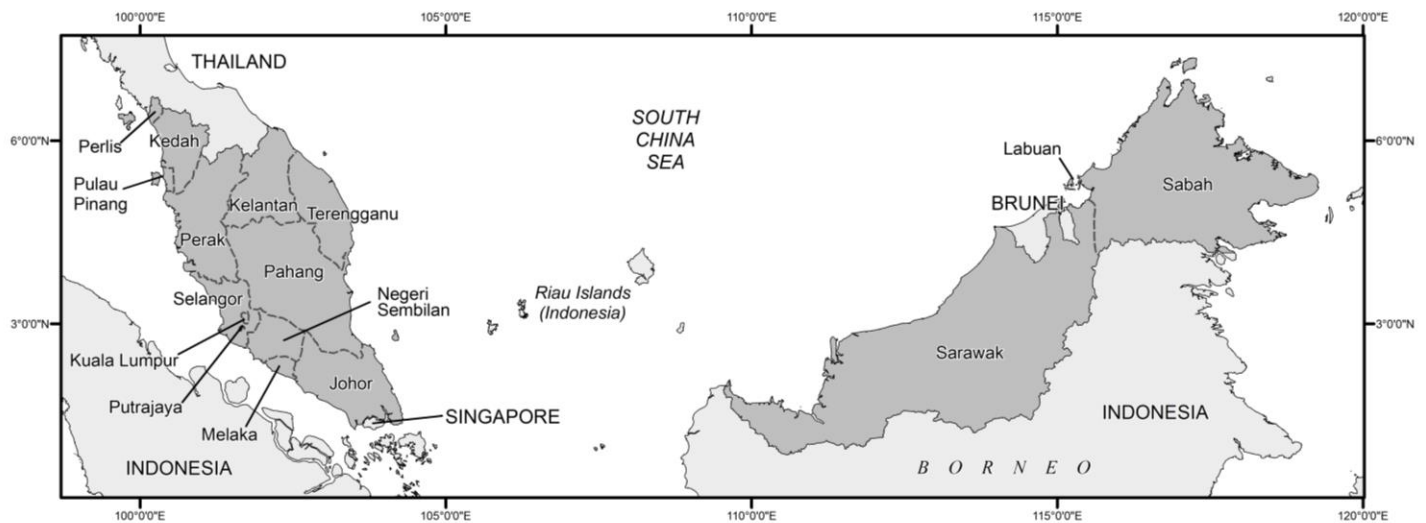
Malaysia's official language is Malay⁸, a standardised form of the Malay language, but English is an active second language, serving as the language for business and instruction in all schools. Malaysia has over 130 minority languages, including Iban, Chinese (including Cantonese, Mandarin, Hokkien), Tamil and Thai⁹. A cultural pact in 1972 between Malaysia and Indonesia led to a common spelling system for the two countries.

Administrative structure

At first-order administrative level (ADM1), Malaysia is divided into 13 states¹⁰ (Malay: *negeri*) and three federal territories (Malay: *wilayah persekutuan*)¹¹. 11 of the states and two federal territories are on Peninsular Malaysia and the other two states and one federal territory are on Borneo. The federal government has direct administration of the federal territories. Governance of the states is divided between the federal and the state governments with 9 of the 13 states retaining their royal families.

At second-order (ADM2) level the states on Peninsular Malaysia are subdivided into districts (Malay: *daerah* or *jajahan*) and further divided into sub-districts (Malay: *mukim*). On Borneo at ADM2 level, the states are split into divisions (Malay: *bahagian*) and further sub-divided into districts (Malay: *daerah*). Federal territories are divided into districts, administrative villages (Malay: *kampung*) or precincts (Malay: *presint*). Details of the ADM1s of Malaysia are listed on the next page.

Malaysia States and Federal Territories



⁸ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Brunei_2006.pdf?lang=en

⁹ <https://www.ethnologue.com/country/MY> ; <https://www.malaysia.gov.my/public/cms/article/page/234/>

¹⁰ Based on historical Malay Kingdoms.

¹¹ <https://www.malaysia.gov.my/public/cms/article/page/236/>

States:

1. Johor (02° 00' 00" N, 103° 30' 00" E)	
Honorific name	Darul Ta'zim ¹²
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-01
Centre	Johor Bahru (01° 27' 56" N, 103° 45' 28" E)
Divided into 10 districts.	

2. Kedah (06° 00' 00" N, 100° 40' 00" E)	
Honorific name	Darul Aman
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-02
Centre	Alor Setar (06° 07' 16" N, 100° 21' 36" E)
Divided into 12 districts.	

3. Kelantan (05° 20' 00" N, 102° 00' 00" E)	
Honorific name	Darul Naim
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-03
Centre	Kota Bharu (06° 08' 00" N, 102° 14' 19" E)
Divided into 10 districts.	

4. Melaka ¹³ (02° 15' 00" N, 102° 15' 00" E)	
Honorific name	Bandaraya Bersejarah
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-04
Centre	Melaka (02° 15' 00" N, 102° 15' 00" E)
Divided into 3 districts.	

5. Negeri Sembilan (02° 45' 00" N, 102° 10' 00" E) ¹⁴	
Honorific name	Darul Khusus
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-05
Centre	Seremban (02° 43' 47" N, 101° 56' 17" E)
Divided into 7 districts.	

6. Pahang (03° 30' 00" N, 102° 45' 00" E)	
Honorific name	Darul Makmur
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-06
Centre	Kuantan (03° 48' 28" N, 103° 19' 34" E)
Divided into 11 districts.	

¹² Sometimes seen as Takzim.

¹³ Sometimes seen as Malacca, Settlement of Malacca, State of Melaka. Note that the conventional English name, Strait of Malacca, should be used for the stretch of water between Peninsular Malaysia and the Indonesian island of Sumatra since it is an international feature.

¹⁴ The name *Negeri Sembilan* means 'nine states', thought to be a reference to the original nine villages that were part of the state.

7. Perak (05° 00' 00" N, 101° 00' 00" E)	
Honorific name	Darul Ridzuan
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-08
Centre	Ipoh (04° 35' 03" N, 101° 04' 58" E)
Divided into 12 districts.	

8. Perlis (06° 30' 11" N, 100° 14' 46" E)	
Honorific name	_15
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-09
Centre	Kangar (06° 26' 29" N, 100° 11' 55" E)
As Perlis is a very small state it is not divided into districts.	

9. Pulau Pinang (05° 19' 34" N, 100° 19' 18" E)¹⁶	
Honorific name	Pulau Mutiara
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-07
Centre	George Town (05° 24' 40" N, 100° 20' 08" E)
Divided into 2 districts.	

10. Sabah (05° 30' 00" N, 117° 00' 00" E)¹⁷	
Honorific name	Negeri Di Bawah Bayu
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-12
Centre	Kota Kinabalu (05° 58' 30" N, 116° 04' 21" E)
Divided into 5 divisions and 26 districts.	

11. Sarawak (02° 30' 00" N, 113° 30' 00" E)	
Honorific name	Bumi Kenyalang
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-13
Centre	Kuching (01° 33' 00" N, 110° 20' 00" E)
Divided into 12 divisions and 40 districts.	

12. Selangor (03° 10' 00" N, 101° 30' 00" E)	
Honorific name	Darul Ehsan
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-10
Centre	Shah Alam (03° 05' N, 101° 32' E) ¹⁸
Divided into 9 districts.	

13. Terengganu (05° 00' 00" N, 103° 00' 00" E)	
Honorific name	Darul Iman
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-11
Centre	Kuala Terengganu (05° 19' 49" N, 103° 08' 27" E)
Divided into 8 districts.	

¹⁵ The honorific name of Perlis was Indera Kayangan until 2015, when the Raja of Perlis decreed that the state would be known simply as Perlis.

¹⁶ Sometimes seen as Penang.

¹⁷ Formerly a protectorate of the United Kingdom known as North Borneo or British North Borneo.

¹⁸ Klang was the state capital of Selangor before it moved to Kuala Lumpur and then Shah Alam.

Federal Territories:

14. Labuan (05° 20' 00" N, 115° 12' 00" E)	
Long form name	Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-15
Centre	Bandar Labuan (Victoria)
Administratively divided into the capital of the territory, Bandar Labuan, and 27 <i>kampung</i> (administrative villages)	

15. Kuala Lumpur (03° 07' 00" N, 101° 41' 00" E)	
Long form name	Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-14
The national capital of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur is divided into 11 districts.	

16. Putrajaya (02° 55' 00" N, 101° 42' 00" E)	
Long form name	Wilayah Persekutuan Putrajaya
ISO 3166-2 code	MY-16
The city of Putrajaya is divided into 20 precincts.	

Useful references

- Administrative divisions; <https://www.malaysia.gov.my/public/cms/article/page/236/> ; <http://www.statoids.com>
- BBC Country Profile: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-15356257>
- CIA World Factbook – Malaysia: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>
- FCO Travel Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/malaysia>
- Government of Malaysia: <https://www.malaysia.gov.my/public/cms/>
- Malaysian Centre for geospatial data infrastructure (MaCGDI), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment: <https://www.mygeoportal.gov.my/search-geographic-names-mygeoname>
- Department of Statistics Malaysia: <https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/>
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO): www.iso.org
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/>
- Languages: www.ethnologue.com; www.omniglot.com
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server (GNS): <http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/>

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