Malaysia

Malaysia is a country of such diversity and offers a vast array of travelling reasons why you should travel there on your next holiday break. With both soft and hard adventure, Malaysia is a place to really get into your interest. Adventures such as hiking, kayaking, climbing, diving, camping, 4WD, wildlife discoveries and photography await those who want to see and experience the most diverse range of animals in the world. The fantastic food and culture are all around you and if you are into shopping, stay for a couple of days in Kuala Lumpur pre or post tour.

Malaysia covers an area of 329,758 square kilometres with a population of over 27.5 million people. Malay, or Bahasa Melayu, is the national language however English is very widely spoken. Islam is the official religion of Malaysia, but all religions are freely practised.

Malaysia is made up of two distinct geographical parts - Peninsular Malaysia to the west and the states of Sarawak and Sabah on Borneo Island to the east, both of which sit just north of the equator and are separated by the South China Sea. Peninsular Malaysia has a border with Thailand to the north and the island of Singapore sits offshore in the south, while Malaysian Borneo shares borders with Brunei and Indonesia.

Pack Ya Bags can translate your wishes into an interesting itinerary and a special interest travel programme. A few ideas include adventure tours (all interests), photographic tours, bird-watching tours, culinary tours, nature tours, cultural and educational programmes, school and university tours and expeditions, textile tours, wildlife and natural history tours. Regardless of your interest... Pack Ya Bags will organise it.

ATMs and Credit Cards: Most foreign credit and debit cards are accepted 24 hours a day with ATMs found in all major districts. Most restaurants, hotels and shops accept credit cards. Not always taken at small restaurants or markets, so always carry some local Ringgit with you (RM).

Tipping: Usually tipping is not expected for many services.

Entry Visa: Most visitors will not require visas to enter Malaysia, but this is dependent upon how long you will be in the country and your country of passport. If in doubt ask us when making your booking.

Language: Malay, but English is spoken well throughout the country.

Weather: Sitting almost directly on the equator, weather in Malaysia is typically balmy and sunny, with stable temperatures ranging between 22 and 32 degrees Celsius throughout the year. It can be slightly cooler in the hill country.

Monsoon Season: Visitors should be aware of monsoon seasons, which bring heavy rains to the eastern coast of Peninsular Malaysia between November and March, and to the west coast of the peninsula between May and September.

What to wear: Dress comfortably with light garments. A small jumper for air conditioned rooms. Shoes must be taken off if you are invited to a private home.

Electrical: Malaysian electrical outlets utilise the same three flat-pronged plugs as Britain and operate at 240v/50Hz.

Drinking Water: Tap water is best avoided - bottled water is cheap and readily available everywhere.

Essentials: Insect repellent and sunscreen. You can buy your beer and wine there!

Accommodation in Malaysia

Accommodation really depends on what, where and the reason you are choosing Malaysia as your destination. Because Malaysia has such a wide variety of reasons to be there together with the fascinating mix of accommodation, the range of accommodation options is just huge.

One of the biggest hotels in the world, for instance, is situated in the Genting Highlands and if you enjoy theme parks and gambling this could well be your destination. Many hotels are available throughout the country to suit all levels, from budget through to 5 star and now even the newly rated 6 star. There are backpackers, lodges, chalets, apartments, beach resorts, bed and breakfasts and even camping when you go out into the national parks and jungle. Places like the Bukit Tinggi Resort capture the essence of the different cultures of the world in a single unique destination! Just a 45 minute drive from Kuala Lumpur and 10km off the East-West Karak Highway, the resort covers 16,000 acres of rugged hills and mountains crowned with lush, tropical rainforests. The perfect destination with a world of difference! Outdoor activities such as horse riding and golf are especially catered for.

Kuala Lumpur the capital of Malaysia is the entry and exit point to this exciting country and has a fine range of accommodation to suit all tastes, including homestays where you can stay with a local family and really get to know the people and the way in which they live.

Off the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia lies the island of Penang which has many fine hotels and resorts including the famous ‘Raffles’ type hotel, ‘The Eastern and Oriental’. Another notable area in the north west of the country, is the island of Langkawi with its many resorts and fine beaches.

If you are on a diving safari you may want to stay at dive resorts specially catering for the diver, stay with dive specialists like ‘The Rig’ or dive from a liveaboard dive boat. Dive resorts are situated throughout Malaysia.

Another cruise option is to take a sailing boat, with a crew or bareboat. Yachts are available from both Langkawi and Kota Kinabalu.

To the east of Peninsular Malaysia is the island of Borneo where we find Sarawak and Sabah, both having unbelievable adventure offers travellers many reasons to visit. Although these areas have many fine hotels and resorts there a many more options to choose from.

We have to mention the famous Longhouses as a number of our tours do include stays in them. A visit to a longhouse is often the highlight of a trip to Sarawak, offering a glimpse into the lifestyle of the various tribes who have, for generations, lived in the remote interior of Borneo. With more than 4,500 longhouses in Sarawak you can see why they are the very centre of communal life. These communal houses, built on stilts, may contain up to 100 individual families in separate ‘apartments’ built under one long roof.

A number of our tours to see the flora and fauna will include nights in jungle camps. These are great opportunities to experience the true feel of being in touch with your surroundings.
Diving in Malaysia

Peninsula Malaysia

The island groups of Perhentian, Redang and Tioman are scattered off the east coast of Malaysia in the warm, tropical, clear waters of the South China Sea. These waters support an incredibly diverse, underwater ecosystem including extensive coral reefs, a multitude of fish species and sea turtles. Indeed the east coast of Malaysia is an important breeding ground for many endangered turtle species.

All the dive programmes below can be organised from 2 days upwards on the various islands or a combination of mainland and island. The suggestions of 6 day 5 night stays let you really explore these fabulous dive sites.

Perhentian Islands. 6 Day 5 Nights: Scuba diving around the Perhentian Islands is a superb experience with marine life in abundance. Apart from footpaths that cut through the jungle, there are no roads on the islands. The only way to get around is by walking through the jungle or taking a sea taxi.

Included: 2 nights in Kuala Lumpur and 3 nights on Perhentian where breakfast, lunch and dinner, and 5 boat dives with tanks, weights will also be included.

Redang Island. 6 Day 5 Nights: The Redang area is known to have the one of the highest number of marine species in the world, making Redang one of the top dive sites for all skills. All sites offer the macro photographer great subjects.

Included: 2 nights in Kuala Lumpur and 3 nights on Redang where breakfast lunch and dinner, and 5 boat dives with tanks, weights will also be included. A complimentary shore dive is offered.

Tioman Island. 6 Day 5 Nights: Tioman Island is one of the biggest and most impressive of the islands on the east coast. Not only is the diving great, but you can explore one of the oldest rainforests and walk on the many walking trails.

Included: Up to 3 dives daily with lunch and refreshments on board your dive boat.

Sabah Malaysia

Sabah’s diversity is unique including fascinating cultures, fun soft and hard adventure, beautiful beaches, and wonderful journalists. Sabah has the world’s largest flower, the Rafflesia, one of the highest mountains in South East Asia, Mount Kinabalu, and one of the world’s top dive sites, Sipadan Island. What more can you ask for!

The sea around Sabah contains some of the best dive sites in the world. The legendary Jacques Cousteau rated the diving around Sipadan as one of his favourite dive sites of all time.

Kota Kinabalu and Sabah provides you with the best possible diving experience. The tropical waters around offer great diving for beginners as well as the experienced diver, this also includes snorkeling. Sabah’s government is ready to protect, preserve and rehabilitate perhaps the greatest diving destinations in the world.

Tunku Abdul Rahman National Park is a cluster of five islands just fifteen minutes from downtown Kota Kinabalu. With white beaches surrounded by crystal clear water and coral gardens this is a great place to begin your adventure in Sabah. From a days diving to a number of days.

Diving in Malaysia

Sabah Malaysia

Layang Layang 6 night and 9 night packages available: Around 300km north of Kota Kinabalu in the South China Sea is the stunning, isolated dive island of Layang Layang where from March to October you can dive the pristine reefs, with excellent visibility, steep walls and regular sightings of pelagic fish such as scalloped hammerhead sharks, grey reef shark, leopard sharks and the occasional threshers and silvertip sharks. The 20m deep lagoon has some great macro creatures to be found including seahorses, cuttlefish and pjoefish.

Layang Layang has a much deserved reputation of being one of the top ten dive locations in the world.

Sipadan, Kapalai and Mabul Islands: Another area in the top ten dive sites is the legendary diving mecca of Sipadan, Kapalai and Mabul Islands, situated off the east coast of Sabah. The residential, schooling barracuda and big-eye trevally, often gather in their thousands forming spectacular tornado-like formations. With the possibility of seeing pelagic species such as mantas, eagle rays, scalloped hammerhead sharks and whale sharks, each dive at Sipadan is a highly anticipated event. It is not only the big fish that amaze divers coming to Sipadan, the macro life is equally fantastic. The diversity and abundance of marine found give Sipadan it’s reputation of being one of the ten best dive locations in the world.

‘The Rig’, 6 Day 5 Nights (or more): The Only Dive Rig in the World and is situated in the heart of the coral triangle and the middle of the three islands, Sipadan, Mabul and Kapalai so is the ideal base to explore the unbelievable diving on offer.


3 boat dives daily between Mabul, Kapalai & Sipadan EXCEPT on arrival and departure day. Unlimited house reef diving with buddy. Tank, and weight belt.

Sipadan-Kapalai Dive Resort. 3 nights to 6 nights: Packages available on the exhilarating Sipadan-Kapalai Dive Resort. The resort sits on stilts in the Ligitan Reefs. The dive sites are close and are reached by speedboat and some of them, just by swimming from the dive centre pier. In just a few minutes, you can be diving in Sipadan to see the big fish and turtles.

Included: Meet and return transfer from Tawau Airport to Kapalai Resort. Accommodation on the resort. Fresh buffet meals (breakfast/lunch/dinner) throughout the stay.

Afternoon snacks served daily at restaurant. Up to 3 dives daily. Unlimited house reef dive in front of Kapalai Dive Centre. Tank, and weight belt.

Lankayan. 3 nights to 6 nights: Lankayan is a jewel in the Sulu Sea, a 1.5 hour boat ride north of Sandakan. Lankayan has been declared part of a marine protected area. Unpopulated and covered by thick tropical island vegetation, this peaceful, untouched paradise is ringed by an endless, pure white sandy beach. The diving has colorful macro, fauna, fascinating wrecks and in season from March to May, regular sightings of giant-giant and harmless whale sharks. Situated within the ‘Sea Turtle Corridor’, Lankayan Island is also a nesting place and foraging ground for sea turtles, most commonly the Green and Hawksbill Turtle.

Included: Meet and land return transfer from Sandakan Airport to Lankayan. Full Board at resort including breakfast, lunch and dinner. Unlimited house reef dive in front of Lankayan Dive Centre. Tank, and weight belt.

No extra charge for night dives in front of Lankayan Dive Centre.
Birds. On this tour you will stay in longhouses and a jungle camp.

There are many options for various reasons and interests and Pack Ya Bags will make your dream into reality. There are so many fantastic tours on offer in this region that we can only suggest a few ideas here.

**Jungles & Cultures. 5 days, 4 nights:** This tour incorporates meeting with local people and jungle trekking to see animals and birds. The tour starts through rural Sarawak to the Babang Ai reservoir. Arriving at Marang Tui longhouse, be a guest of the village chief (Tuai Rumah). Relax on the “rust” (common verandah) and spend time with the Iban people. Swim and explore the rainforest or try fishing Iban-style. During the tour go to the Lubok Kaisi jungle camp. Orang-utans are occasionally seen (at dusk or at dawn) in this area. A great tour to get into the natural way of life.

**The Red Ape Trail (Trekking). 5 days, 4 nights:** This tour is a trekking tour and walks can be between 4 and 7 hours. You will be rewarded with the most wonderful sights. Along the rainforest trails in this area you will spend time looking for wild orang-utans and other wildlife such as the pig-tailed macaque, giant squirrel and a variety of birds. On this tour you will stay in longhouses and a jungle camp.

**Other great treks** are available including the Barin Highlands. An 8 day 7 night trek for experienced hikers.

**Rafting Escapade. 4 days 3 nights:** Kuching, Utaj Longhouse, and Lubok Pintau. The journey takes you across the deep blue water of the lake and up the narrow Batang Ai River and onto the Iban longhouse. Climb higher up the river occasionally shooting the rapids. Sometimes in the dry season you will have to help push the boats over the dry areas. After another night in the Lubok Pintau longhouse, help make the traditional Iban raft made from timber and bamboo lashed together with jungle creepers. Then... set off downstream on a rafting trip in near white water conditions. Yeah!!

**Conservation & Special Interest**

**Orang Utan Conservation Programme and The Wild Man of Borneo. 8 Days 7 Nights:** On day 2 you will be working with the Matang Orang Utan Rehabilitation Programme, and will be briefed by the park manager on your conservation tasks. Day 3 you will depart for the Semenggok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre, where again you will be briefed on your tasks for involvement. This 8 day tour includes visits to the Bako National Park where you may see the rare proboscis monkey, found exclusively in Borneo, silver leaf monkeys, long-tailed macaque, monitor lizard, flying lemurs, wild boar, bird species and exotic plants and flowers. You will be visiting a farmers market, pepper garden, wild orchids, and the frogs of Borneo.

**Frog Tours Kubah National Park. 2 Days 1 Night:** During this tour you will learn how to encounter species of frog and/or snakes in detail, by an amphibian specialist. You will be staying at the Matang Wildlife Centre. During your stay you will take a 45 minute walk to see various species including learning a little about the orang-utan.

**Across Borneo including the famous ‘Mulu Caves’. 12 Days 11 Nights:** Experience all the above and more in this 12 day special. Although it is nature based, there is hiking, bird watching, jungle walks and conservation work. This is a great trip if you really want to get involved and experience the unique flora and fauna in this part of the world. This trip will also include the famous Mulu Caves and the amazing array of animals and birds. There are many options for various reasons and interests and Pack Ya Bags will make your dream into reality.
Peninsula Malaysia

East Coast Adventure. 6 day 5 night: The tour includes a stay at the Tanjung Jara Resort, visiting Kuantan, a local town, and the Taman Negara, Malaysia’s National Park. Covering over 4343 sq. km, it was established in 1939 by the Sultan of three states to protect and preserve the indigenous flora and fauna. Most people go to Taman Negara for jungle treks, fishing and boat trips along the virgin jungle rivers. This trip incorporates most of these, and if you are feeling fit and ready to go, why not do a trek up the Gunung Tahan, the highest mountain in Peninsula Malaysia. A 10 day tour is also available to this fascinating area which also includes trekking.

Bird Watching Tours. 5, 7 and 10 day: Half of Malaysia’s land mass is covered in rainforests or plantations. With this diversity of habitats, there are many places to view the abundant birdlife. Malaysian rainforests are generally divided into three distinctive habitat types - coastal mangroves, lowland rainforests and mountain forests. Swampy mangrove forest eco-systems, where saltwater meets freshwater on the coastline fringe, are home to birds such as the common kingfisher. Lowland rainforests, including freshwater swamps, peat and hill forests, remains the most extensive habitat for more than 200 bird varieties, among the Stomyst sparrow and the green imperial pigeon. Mountain forests generally occur above an elevation of 900m, where species such as the mountain peacock pheasant and mountain blackeye thrive in the cool, damp climates and stunted trees of these high altitude regions. 4u

A series of small adventure trips can be taken from Penang and Langkawi. Both are popular islands to visit with lots to keep you occupied at the same time as relaxing into the local flavour. Short tours such as nature cycling, kayak trips, bird watching, jungle treks, horse riding and cultural involvement are just a few of the options available to you through Pack Yo Bags on the Peninsula.

Other Interests in Malaysia

Self Drive Tour: If you are a confident driver why not go on one of our freedom tours? With these tours we organise your vehicle and then work out the route for you and make sure your accommodation is all arranged. There is nothing like knowing where you will be arriving each day and the safety of knowing you have a good bed and food for the night. We suggest a number of options around from Peninsula Malaysia from 7 to 14 days and more.

Sports Tours: We can organise sports tours involving school groups as well as clubs in soccer, hockey, netball & cricket matches. The local sports facilities are good and for most parts of the year, the weather is ideal to host a successful sporting event. Your team can look forward to an unforgettable time playing in Malaysia. If you are just a supporter, we can build a tour package around the sporting events for your holiday. Malaysia plays host to several major sporting events like Formula One Race, MotoGP, Malaysia Golf Open & the Monsoon Cup. PT

Culinary Tours: Malaysian food has the best blend of the Malay, Chinese and Indian cooking. The combination of the Chinese and Malay gives rise to the delectable Penanakan cuisine. The Indian Muslim style (known as mamak) infuses the local Malay flavour in their cooking. With such a great diversity of food styles, Malaysia is a special place to experience a local feast especially at the hawker stalls. Pack Yo Bags can organise a culinary programme covering Melacca, Kuala Lumpur and Penang where you can enjoy traditional style cooking classes featuring local favourites like Laksa, Curry, Nasi Lemak and lots more.

There are many options for various reasons and interests and Pack Yo Bags will make your dream into reality. Get in touch with us now.

Other Interests in Malaysia

Golf Tours: With more than 200 golf courses throughout Malaysia, you can easily include a golf component in one of our packages, but if you want a total golf experience, take a tour based around golf. The weather is ideal year round and excellent golf courses are available all over the country. From those found high in the mountains of Borneo to the tropical islands of Langkawi and Penang and of course in the heart of Kuala Lumpur. Many of these courses are designed by renowned professional golfers, with spectacular backdrops and scenery and all are equipped with the best facilities and amenities to make your golfing a complete and unforgettable experience.

Here are a couple of suggestions:

Kota Kinabalu Golf Package. 5 days 4 nights: A choice of accommodation with breakfast throughout the 4 nights with 18 hole rounds of golf at three different courses on three different days. Dinner is included at three local restaurants giving you time to go over your great shots of the days. Choose from these lovely courses: Sutera Harbour Golf Club, Dalit Bay Golf Club, Sabah Golf Country Club, and the Nexus Karambunai Golf Club.

Kuala Lumpur Golf Package. 4 days 3 nights: A choice of accommodation with breakfast throughout the 3 nights with 18 hole rounds of golf at two different courses on two different days. Dinner is included at two local restaurants and maybe after, if you are in the mood, a little night time shopping or have a couple of drinks to cool you down. These are the golf courses you will play: The Saujana Golf and Country Club and the Perangang Temple Golf Club.

Borneo Motor Cycle Adventures in Sabah: These motor cycle tours can be for however many days you would like, as the tours are organised around you. This allows you to choose the many different areas you may want to visit and experience. The tours have no set departures. The bikes are Aprilia Pegaso Trial bikes. This is an ideal bike for touring and off road if required. They are reliable, versatile and easy to handle with plenty of power plus a very comfortable seat and riding position. A pilon passenger can be accommodated. Included: Airport transfers, Aprilia Pegaso 650 trail motorcycle, fully comprehensive insurance, all meals and drinks throughout your Borneo Biking Adventure, beer and wine but NOT spirits, accommodation while away from Sinurambi, train, ferry, entrance fees to national parks, laundry service, email, use of swimming pool and snoker room at Sinurambi. Sinurambi is one of the most spectacular homes in Sabah. It is perched 1350 feet above sea level and commands stunning views across the South China Sea. It will be your home for the duration of your Borneo Biking Adventure.

Sailing: Crewed and Bareboat sailing is popular in Malaysia, particularly around the Islands of Langkawi, in the Andaman Sea and off the coast of Kota Kinabalu, in Tunku Abdul Rahman National Park. It is possible to charter a yacht in these locations and explore the wonderful islands of Malaysia at your own pace. Any amount of days can be organised for you. If you just want to be spoiled for a day take a trip on a private 46 foot Sailing Catamaran.

Incentive Tour: There is much to see and do for your meetings and incentive group to Malaysia, such as a combination of Kuala Lumpur and Langkawi or Penang. A tropical escapade is always a popular choice. Sabah and Sarawak offer adventure and wildlife programmes. Combine these with some creative ideas, you will get a truly rewarding experience for all the participants.

Horse riding and treks: Horse riding treks and camps can be organised to suit your skills and time.
Festivals in Malaysia

Malaysia’s unique diversity is reflected in the incredible range of events, both sporting and cultural and festivals held all over the country every year. Many are unique to this beautiful country and every month there is something of interest happening, which will appeal to visitors from all over the world.

Below is a brief outline of some of the major events which are held on an annual basis. It is by no means an exhaustive list and for further information on any event or festival please contact Pack Ya Bags for more information.

**Royal Langkawi International Regatta:** Held in January every year, yachts and sailors from all over the world converge on the beautiful islands of Langkawi. Events are held in different classes ranging from multihull’s to club cruisers.

**Petronas Formula One Grand Prix:** Every April, Sepang raceway in Kuala Lumpur comes alive with the roar of Formula One cars as they battle for supremacy. Visitors can soak up the atmosphere and excitement over 3 days of racing, just remember to bring your ear plugs!

**Sabah Fest:** This rich cultural extravaganza held over 2 days in Kota Kinabalu incorporates the very best of local dance, music, fashion, food and so much more.

**Penang International Dragon Boat Festival:** Since its inception in 1956, Penang, off the west coast of Malaysia, hosts this amazing two day event every June. Teams from all around the world compete at this international tourism carnival.

**Rainforest World Music Festival:** This iconic and unique festival is held at the base of Mt Santubong, near the Sarawak Cultural Village, Kuching over 3 days every July. For the last 3 years it has been voted as one of the top 25 Best International Festivals by Songlines with artists from all over the world attending.

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**Malaysia Megasale Shopping Carnival:** A two month shopping extravaganza! Held throughout Malaysia in July and August every year… make sure you bring your credit card and an empty suitcase with you!!

**Malaysian Motorcycle Grand Prix:** Held every October at Sepang raceway in Kuala Lumpur.

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**Sultan’s Cup Horse Endurance Challenge:** Held in the province of Terangganu on the east coast of Peninsula Malaysia each November. This event, run over 120km of undulating terrain tests the endurance of competing horses and their riders in various categories.

**Sabah River Rafting Expedition:** Held over a week in May every year, participants from all over the world experience the amazing sights and sounds of this river which is situated on the Eastern side of Peninsula Malaysia.

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Spear. Loin cloth. Feathers.
Just the typical attire for work.

The Tribesman of Sarawak. Once formidable headhunters. Today merely peaceful hunters.

Step into the tribal world of Sarawak and you will instantly be welcomed with music, dance, wine and warm smiles.
This is more than just a holiday destination. It is an experience that will last you a lifetime.
Come and embrace all that you can imagine, and more.