

Malaysia

Business Travel Guide

Compiled by:

Embassy of Switzerland in Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur, August 2024

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) Terminal 1 (T1) and Terminal 2 (T2) are the main airports for international arrivals and departures in Malaysia. Swiss nationals travelling to Malaysia for 90 days or less are exempted from obtaining a visa as long as their passport is valid for at least six months upon arrival. Visitors may be required to show proof of sufficient funds for staying in Malaysia, and have a valid return ticket or onward ticket to another country.

The Malaysian government issues the Multiple Entry Visa to foreign nationals who require a visa to enter mainly for business matters. It is valid for a period within three months to twelve months from the date of issue. The validity of the Multiple Entry Visa is one year. Each entry is for 30 days only and the extension of stay is not allowed.

Visitors are advised to refer to the latest updates by the Immigration Department of Malaysia:
<https://www.imi.gov.my>.

Transfer from the airport to the city center:

- KLIA Ekspres – the express airport rail link that runs from KL Sentral, a transit hub within Kuala Lumpur, to KLIA T1 and T2 stations. The train service runs every 20 minutes from 5am – 12 midnight, and the journey takes 28 minutes to KLIA T1. It takes another 3 minutes between KLIA T1 and T2. A single standard ticket is MYR 55, return ticket MYR 100. For further information visit <https://www.kliaekspres.com>.
- Grab Car – a ride-hailing service with prices around MYR 65 to MY 75 depending on the destination in Kuala Lumpur and toll charges.
- Taxi – airport taxi services (which operate through a coupon system that can be purchased at the airport) and metered taxi are available at the airport.
- Bus – there are various bus companies traveling from the airport to different bus stations in Kuala Lumpur city center and outside of Kuala Lumpur. The bus fare ranges from MYR 12 to MYR 15 for destinations in Kuala Lumpur.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Since August 2022, all travellers are allowed to enter Malaysia regardless of their COVID-19 vaccination status and do not require a pre-departure or on-arrival COVID-19 test. As of 15 July 2024, COVID-19 positive individuals will no longer be placed under a Home Surveillance Order (HSO). The use of face masks for Covid-19 positive individuals and anyone experiencing respiratory symptoms is mandatory, especially in healthcare settings or crowded environments. Individuals tested positive are advised to minimize interactions with others and to seek medical attention immediately if symptoms worsen.

PUBLIC SECURITY / RECOMMENDED PRECAUTIONS

Malaysia can generally be regarded as a stable country. The situation in the Middle East has recently led to an increase in demonstrations. Violent riots and clashes with the security forces cannot be ruled out during demonstrations. Avoid demonstrations and large gatherings of people of any kind. Participation in demonstrations is prohibited for foreign nationals.

Terrorist attacks cannot be ruled out throughout the country. Non-urgent travel to the coasts in the north and east of Sabah state and to the offshore islands is not advised due to a considerable risk of kidnapping.

Find out about the current security situation in the media before and during the trip to other parts of the country.

Visit the FDFA Travel Advice for Malaysia website for further information: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/representations-and-travel-advice/malaysia/travel-advice-malaysia.html>

TIME ZONE

Time difference between Switzerland and

Kuala Lumpur

Central European Time (CET) +7 hours

BUSINESS HOURS

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays and Nationals Holidays
Government Offices*	7.30am-5.30pm	closed	closed
Banks**	9.15am-4.30pm	closed	closed
Shops***	10am-10pm	10am-10pm	10am-10pm

* Office hours vary between government agencies.

** The operating hours vary between banks. Some banks in the shopping complexes or selected branches operate 6 days a week.

*** Some shops may have shorter or longer opening hours, especially during the holiday season.

The states of Kedah, Kelantan, Johor and Terengganu have working days from Sunday to Thursday. The rest of the country follows the conventional workweek, which runs from Monday to Friday. Normal

office hours in Malaysia start from 9am to 6pm, with some businesses operating until noon on Saturdays. Lunch break on Mondays to Thursdays for most offices in Malaysia are ~12.30pm to 1.30pm. The lunch break on Fridays is longer (~12.15pm to 2.45pm) to allow for the Muslim Friday prayers.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

National Day	31 August 2024
Malaysia Day / Prophet Muhammad's Birthday	16 September 2024
Deepavali	31 October 2024
Christmas Day	25 December 2024
New Year's Day	1 January 2025

The main festival in Malaysia is Hari Raya Aidil Fitri, which is celebrated by the Muslim-majority population. During this period, most businesses and government departments are closed. Other major holidays are Chinese New Year, Hari Raya Haji and Deepavali. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, it is usually compensated on the next working day (Monday). Each state has additional holidays and observances in addition to the national public holidays.

NATIONAL TRADE FAIR CALENDAR

The dates of the main trade fairs can be obtained from:

<https://10times.com/malaysia/tradeshows>

<https://www.tradefairdates.com/Fairs-Malaysia-Z155-S1.html>

COMMUNICATION: TELEPHONE AND INTERNET

Malaysia's country code is: +60

Local SIM card can be bought at: airports, shopping malls, convenience stores and bus/train stations. The passport is required for identity verification during SIM card registration.

Important phone numbers:

Police	999 or 112
Fire department	999 or 112
Medical emergency	999 or 112

It is easy to get connected from Malaysia to anywhere in the world using telephone or internet. Internet services are available at various locations such as hotels, restaurants/cafes and shopping malls as part of their complimentary service. Free public WiFi can also be found in selected hotspot areas provided by the local councils or internet service providers. The internet coverage is generally strong in major cities, but can be limited in remote areas.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Electricity plug and socket:



The standard voltage in Malaysia is 240 V with a frequency of 50 Hz.

Electric appliances in the 220V-240V range that are widely used in Europe are compatible in Malaysia. An adapter will be required for using appliances as the power outlet and plug type used in Malaysia is type G, in contrast to the types C and J used in Switzerland.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

The national currency in Malaysia is the Malaysian Ringgit (MYR).

The exchange rate as of 21 July 2024: CHF 1 = MYR 5.27

When entering or leaving the country with USD10,000 or more in cash or other monetary instruments, the money must be declared in writing to the customs office.

Popular payment modes in the country are cash, debit and credit cards (both Visa and Master Card), and e-money. The majority of the hotels, retail stores and restaurants only accept the Malaysian Ringgit.

In dining venues a service charge of 10% is usually included in the bill, and tipping is not expected. An additional tip is always appreciated and a gesture of appreciation for the service provided. Not all sectors add a service charge, and customers can check the bill to see if it has been included.

Acceptance of methods of payment:

	everywhere	almost everywhere	limited	not accepted
Cash (national currency)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MasterCard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
American Express	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apple Pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Google / Samsung Pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Touch 'n Go / Grab e-wallet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DOMESTIC TRAVEL, LOCAL TRANSPORT

The most commonly used kind of transport is e-hailing services in urban areas. The quality of the services is good. We usually recommend avoiding rush hour where possible, and checking the price before booking.

Main ride hailing apps: the most well-known e-hailing service in Malaysia is GrabCar, other e-hailing services include MyCar, EzCab, Mula, Maxim.

Taxi fares are calculated according to meters. The flag-off fare for taxis is MYR 3 (including first km or first 3 minutes), and passengers will be charged 25 cents for every 200 meters thereafter. For taxis caught in a traffic jam, the fare will be MYR 3 for the first 3 minutes, and 25 cents for every subsequent 36 seconds. Other types of taxis such as Executive taxi charge higher rates. Additional charges include actual road toll charges and a 50% surcharge is levied between midnight and 6am. The estimated taxi fare for a 10km journey is MYR 14.30 (CHF 2.70).

Main method of payment for taxi and light rapid transit (LRT): cash, credit / debit card, Touch 'n Go card

Buses are not recommended for business travellers due to the high volume of passengers and inconsistent schedules.

Business travellers can alternatively opt for private car services with a designated local driver during their meetings in Malaysia to ensure a smooth and timely journey. Car rental services from reputable service providers such as Hertz, Avis and SoCar can be booked directly or through most hotels.

ACCOMMODATION, TEMPORARY OFFICE SPACE

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture in Malaysia provides a list of rated tourist accommodation premises across Malaysia: <https://www.motac.gov.my/en/check/hotel>

Urban areas provide greater options of short-term office space rental or shared office space such as:

- Co-labs Coworking (<https://co-labs.asia/locations>)
- WeWork (<https://www.wework.com//office-space/kuala-lumpur>)
- Colony (<https://colony.work>)
- Common Ground (<https://www.commonground.work>)

LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

Though Bahasa Malaysia or Malay is the official language, and different ethnicities have their own languages (e.g. Mandarin, Cantonese, Tamil), English is widely used for business interactions in the private sector. Bahasa Malaysia might be required for engaging with government officials and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Therefore, Swiss companies may hire an interpreter for business meetings or site visits depending on the scenario, though it is usually not required.

BUSINESS PRACTICES

Tips for initiating business contacts:

Swiss companies have a good reputation in Malaysia as high-quality investors and trustworthy partners; therefore, local firms may be receptive to network invitations. Positive responses will depend upon alignment between the Swiss company's offerings and the Malaysian company's business goals.

It is customary to request a meeting by sending an email or a letter at least 3 to 4 weeks in advance. During introduction meetings, it is advisable for Swiss firms to provide business cards, a printed copy of their company profile, and product/service brochures. Companies may also send soft copies of relevant materials after the meeting.

Having existing local business associates make introductions would be beneficial. Otherwise, cold calling is common although it can take a long time with multiple follow-ups. It is important to identify and reach out to the decision-maker within the company to expedite the process and obtain better outcomes.

People with honourable titles such as Datuk, Dato', and Tan Sri are respectfully addressed by inserting their title before the first name. The rules similarly apply for Dr, Mr, Ms, and Miss. Office hierarchy is important, and the highest-ranking or senior executives should be addressed first.

Scheduling meetings:

Meetings may last longer than planned because it is common for companies to engage in small talks and take breaks for refreshments. It is essential to plan the travel itinerary carefully, taking into account potential extra meeting time and traffic congestion during peak hours.

Business attire:

As meetings are typically held in a formal setting, it is advisable to dress up in professional attire.

Introducing yourself:

Business cards are usually first given out by the visiting party. Hand out business cards with both hands, with the card details facing the receiver in the right direction. When receiving the business card, hold it respectfully and take a moment to look at it before putting it away.

Building trust and personal relationships:

Malaysia has a diverse mix of ethnicities, all working together and creating a distinctive local business culture. It is important to establish a personal bond before proceeding with business dealings with Malaysian counterparts.

Possessing a fair understanding of religious and cultural customs would impress potential partners and establish long-term relationships. For instance, Malay Muslims only consume halal food and beverages, while Hindus do not consume beef. When meeting with local people, a simple handshake is acceptable but do not attempt to give them a friendly hug or kiss. Malaysians are known for their friendliness and courtesy, as they usually aim to develop a sense of harmony in their business circles. Similar to most other Asian cultures, the concept of face is important in Malaysia. It is considered impolite to publicly embarrass somebody or to express anger. This can result in non-direct communication, where Malaysians might avoid giving an outright negative response even when they do not agree with a proposal.

Offering and accepting gifts and invitations:

It is not recommended to bring costly gifts to meetings due to Malaysia's no gift policy. However, inexpensive gifts, such as souvenirs, are acceptable.

Sensitive topics:

Simple ice-breaker topics such as food, culture, sports and travel destinations are acceptable. It is good to avoid talking about politics during official meetings to avoid sensitive pain points.

BUSINESS RISKS

In the Global Corruption Index (GCI) 2023, which covers 196 countries and territories and measures the state of corruption and white-collar crimes around the world, Malaysia scored 35.83 on a 0-100 scale (with 0 corresponding to the lowest risk and 100 to the highest risk). With a global rank of 50, the risk level is categorized as low.

In terms of legal certainty, it is essential for Swiss companies to work with reputable law firms to ensure transparency and compliance with legal requirements in transactions. Formal contracts/agreements are usually detailed and precise to avoid any ambiguity and misunderstanding. It might take significant time before an agreement is reached between parties. Swiss companies may bring their appointed lawyers and interpreters during the contract signing.

The Asian International Arbitration Centre (<https://www.aiac.world/>) is a not-for-profit, non-governmental international arbitral institution based in Kuala Lumpur, focusing on dispute resolution and following a comprehensive set of rules in line with international standards.

Swiss Export Risk Insurance SERV insures political and *del credere* risks involved in exporting goods and services.

[Products for Swiss exporters](#)

[Products for financial institutions](#)

The full range of services and products offered by SERV can be obtained at www.serv-ch.com.

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IMPORT OF SAMPLES AND CATALOGUES

The Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MICCI) is appointed by the Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD) as the guaranteeing agency for the issuance of ATA Carnet documents for the temporary importation of samples, exhibition materials and professional equipment into foreign countries without duty. For further information visit the MICCI website: <https://www.micci.com> and/or the RMCD website: <https://www.customs.gov.my/en>

USEFUL LOCAL WEBSITES, ADDRESSES, EMAIL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

	The Edge Malaysia	https://theedgemalaysia.com/
Business news	Business Today	https://www.businesstoday.com.my/
	The Star	https://www.thestar.com.my/
	New Straits Times	https://www.nst.com.my/
Customs call center	Website: https://www.customs.gov.my/en	Tel: 1 300 88 8500 E-mail: ccc@customs.gov.my

ADDRESSES OF EMBASSY AND CONSULATES OF SWITZERLAND

Embassy of Switzerland in Malaysia

16, Persiaran Madge
55000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tel: +60 3 21 48 06 22
E-mail: kualalumpur@eda.admin.ch
Website: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/kualalumpur>

Regional Consular Center Bangkok c/o Embassy of Switzerland in Thailand

35 North Wireless road (Thanon Witthayu Nuea)
Lumphini, Pathum Wan
Bangkok 10330, Thailand
Tel: +66 2 674 6900
E-mail: bangkok@eda.admin.ch

Opening times:

Monday – Thursday: 8am – 12 noon, 1 – 4pm

Friday: 8am – 1.30pm

All consular services and visa support for people residing in Malaysia are provided by the Regional Consular Center Bangkok.

ADDRESSES BILATERAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Swiss Malaysian Chamber of Commerce (SMCC)

1-17-1, Menara Bangkok Bank @ Berjaya Central Park
No 105, Jalan Ampang
50450 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tel: +60 12 742 87 99
E-mail: info@smcc.org.my
Website: <https://smcc.org.my>

Business hours:

Monday – Friday: 9am – 5.30pm

ADDRESSES OF THE EMBASSY AND CONSULATE OF MALAYSIA IN SWITZERLAND

Embassy of Malaysia in Switzerland

Jungfraustrasse 1
3005 Berne, Switzerland
Tel: (+41) 31 350 47 00
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Fax: (+41) 31 350 47 02
E-mail: mwberne@kln.gov.my
Website: https://www.kln.gov.my/web/che_berne

Consulate General / Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the UN, Geneva

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20, Route de Pré-Bois
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1215 Geneva, Switzerland
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https://www.kln.gov.my/web/che_geneva

Opening times:

Monday – Friday: 9am – 5pm

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