

## Melaka (Malacca)

Malacca (Malay: Melaka, dubbed as The Historical State or Negeri Bersejarah amongst locals) is the third smallest Malaysian state, after Perlis and Penang.

It is located in the southern region of the Malay Peninsula, on the Straits of Malacca. It borders Negeri Sembilan to the north and the state of Johor to the south. The state's capital is Malacca Town. This historical city centre has been listed as a prominent World Heritage Site of UNESCO since 7th July 2008.

Although Malacca was once one of the oldest Malay sultanates, the state has no Sultan today. Instead, the head of state is the Yang di-Pertua Negeri or Governor.

The state of Malacca covers an area of 1,650-sq. km. or 0.5 percent of the whole area of Malaysia. The state is divided into 3 districts, that is Central Melaka (Melaka Tengah) (314 km<sup>2</sup>), Alor Gajah (660 km<sup>2</sup>), and Jasin (676 km<sup>2</sup>). Malacca is located on the southwestern coast of Malay Peninsula opposite Sumatra, with the state of Negeri Sembilan to the north and Johor to the east. Malacca is also situated roughly two-thirds of the way down the West coast, 148 km south of Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia and 245 km north of Singapore and commanding a central position on the Straits of Malacca. The state capital Malacca Town is strategically located between the two national capitals (of Malaysia and Singapore respectively) and is linked with excellent roads and highways. Malacca is yet to have its own train station, though the terminal at Tampin, Negeri Sembilan is easily accessible. It has a domestic airport terminal located in Batu Berendam.

The offshore Pulau Besar (Malacca), Pulau Upeh and Tanjung Tuan are also parts of Malacca.

Canals in Malacca Malacca has a population of 759,000 as of 2007, being composed of:

Malays: 57%;

Chinese: 32%, including the Peranakan community;

Indians, including the Chitty people: a sizeable minority;

Kristang, people with partial Portuguese ancestry: a small community.

The major towns of Malacca are Malacca Town, Alor Gajah, Masjid Tanah, Jasin, Merlimau, Batu Berendam and Ayer Keroh.

Malacca is administered by its State Assembly and Executive Committee (EXCO). The State Assembly represents the highest authority in the state and decides on policy matters. The EXCO is responsible to the State Assembly and comprises members who are appointed every five years by the political party in power. It is headed by the Governor (Yang Di-Pertua Negeri) who is appointed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia.

The Chief Minister's Department is the administrative pillar of the State Government, and is responsible for the overall administration of the State, as well as its political interest. The administrative complex houses the Chief Minister's office, as well as the office of the State Secretariat. For administrative purposes, Malacca is divided into three districts under separate jurisdiction:

Malacca Central District & Land Office

Alor Gajah District & Land Office

Jasin District & Land Office

These offices render various services and facilities to the people in their daily lives.

Economy

The tourism and manufacturing sectors are the two most important sectors in the state economy. Malacca has adopted as its slogan, "Visiting Malacca Means Visiting Malaysia" ("Melawat Melaka Bererti Melawati Malaysia"). It is rich in cultural heritage and bears several places of historical interest.

Malacca hold up several modern shopping Complex to attract more visitor to this state. Examples are Mahkota Parade Shopping Centre at Plaza Mahkota (City Centre), Dataran Pahlawan Melaka Megamall on the used to be the most historical field that is Padang Pahlawan where Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al Haj first announced the independent day of Federation Of Malaya, Melaka Mall Shopping Complexe ( formerly known as Kotamas Shopping Complexe) and Plaza Melaka Raya at the Taman Melaka Raya.

Malacca also it very own Hypermarket and departmental store. few examples are Parkson Departmental Store ( Mahkota Parade and Melaka Mall), Jusco Supermarket and Departmental Store (Ayer Keroh and coming soon near Melaka

Sentral), Tesco Hypermarket and Giant Hypermarket at Bachang Utama; also Supermarket at (Mahkota Parade).

Apart from tourism, Malacca is also a manufacturing centre for products ranging from food and consumer products, through high-tech weaponry and automotive components to electronic and computer parts. There are at least 23 industrial estates that houses some 500 factories from the United States, Germany, Japan, Taiwan, and Singapore.

Education  
Malacca has given birth to numerous successful Malaysians who have achieved immense success in Malaysia and abroad[citation needed].

The state is much sought after for medical education with the establishment of the Melaka Manipal Medical College which located in Bukit Baru. It has produced many doctors who are serving the country or working abroad since its inception in 1997.

The state also has a twin campus of Multimedia University which located in Bukit Beruang. The campus currently attracts many foreign students, especially those from the Middle East and Africa, through its computer and engineering programmes. The university also features degree programmes in fields like robotics, bio-instrumentation and law. Most of the student population of Multimedia University is drawn from its foundation programmes, also known as the Alpha Programmes.

Malacca also has several public universities and colleges such as, Universiti Teknologi Mara UiTM in Lendu, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka, UTeM (previously known as Kolej Universiti Teknikal Kebangsaan Malaysia, KUTKM) located in Ayer Keroh, Kolej Yayasan Melaka (KYM), Bukit Baru and Kolej Teknologi Islam Antarabangsa Melaka (KTIAM).

Malacca have their own boarding school that is Sekolah Menengah Sains Muzaffar Syah Melaka (formerly known as Mozac by the present student here). The intake of student to this school is based on the MO Education of Malaysia. Usually the student with great achievement is the student who will be chosen to enter this school. Student normally come from this state, Negeri Sembilan, Johor or from the Klang Valley.

Culture

Baba-Nyonya house in Melaka  
The historic centre of Malacca was inscribed on the World Heritage List on 7 July 2008 together with George Town, the capital of Penang.

The Malays who are the original settlers of Malacca since 1400, form the largest community. The Malaccan Malays are rich in culture from their daily life to the building arts. The famous Malacca Steps or Tangga Melaka are common in front of many Malay houses in Malacca.

Two of the most important museums in Malacca are the Baba Nyonya Heritage Museum and the Melaka Sultanate Palace Museum.

Malacca is well-known for its food. Most notable of all is the traditional Malay dishes like ikan asam pedas, sambal belacan and cencaluk.

Belacan, a Malay variety of shrimp paste, is prepared from fresh tiny shrimp of a species known as geragau in Malay. These are mashed into a paste and buried for several months. The fermented shrimp are then dug up, fried and hard-pressed into cakes. Belacan is used as an ingredient in many dishes, or eaten on its own with rice. A common preparation is sambal belacan, made by mixing belacan with chilli peppers, minced garlic, shallot paste and sugar and then fried. The aroma from the frying mixture can be unpalatable to Westerners who have not become accustomed to it, but is an absolute delight to the Asian connoisseur. Melaka is also famous for satay celup. Raw fish and meat are skewered onto sticks which is then cooked in a peanut sauce. The satay celup is often self service where you pay for individual sticks.

There is also Nyonya-Baba cuisine which is a mixture of Chinese (mostly southern Hokkien or Fujian influence), Portuguese, Dutch, Indian, British and Malay cooking with most dishes being spicy in nature. Interesting dishes of the Peranakan include Itek Tim (a soup containing duck and salted vegetables), Ayam Pong Teh (chicken casserole with salted brown-bean sauce which is usually served with potatoes) as well as the famous Nyonya Laksa. Chicken Rice Ball is another dish popular with domestic Chinese tourists.

Malacca's ethnic Portuguese population are the descendants of Portuguese colonists from the 16th and 17th centuries. Even to this day, many of the ancient traditions passed down since the Portuguese occupation are still practised, i.e. "Intrudu" from portuguese word "Entrudo" (a water festival that marks the beginning of Lent, the Catholic fasting period), "branyu" (traditional dance), "Santa Cruz" (a yearly Festival of street celebrations).

The Portuguese colonists contributed dishes like Devil's Curry and Portuguese egg tarts to the town's already rich cuisine. Ikan Bakar (roasted fish) restaurants in Umbai, Serkam and Alai are also popular.

#### Transport

Pulau Sebang at Alor Gajah district, a town 30 km north of Malacca town, is the nearest train station that serves Malacca. There were railway tracks from Pulau Sebang to Malacca before World War II but were dismantled by the Japanese during the war for the construction of the infamous Burmese Death Railway. It was never rebuilt after the war though traces of the line remain.

Malacca has a bus station, Melaka Central which has air-conditioned waiting areas and separate areas for buses plying the town routes and for buses plying the intertown routes with regular bus services to Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru, and other places in Malaysia. Batu Berendam Airport in Batu Berendam mainly serves chartered flights from around the region. It also serves as a flight school for Malaysia Flying Academy. It is now refurbished into a brand new international Airport for the state of Melaka.

The Ayer Keroh exit at the North-South highway is the main entry to Malacca. There are two additional exits along the North-South highway, namely the Alor Gajah and Jasin exits

#### Popular historical attractions

##### Fort A Famosa

Constructed by the Portuguese in 1511, it suffered severe structural damage during the Dutch invasion. The plan by the British to destroy it was aborted as a result of the intervention of Sir Stamford Raffles in 1808.

##### St. John's Fort

Reconstructed by the Dutch in the third quarter of the 18th century, the cannons in this fort point inwards towards the mainland because at that time, the threat to Malacca was mainly from inland rather than the sea.

##### St. Peter's Church

Constructed in 1710 under the Dutch administration, the church is the oldest Catholic church in Malaysia. Its facade and decorative embellishment is a mix of both eastern and western architecture. Its bell was delivered from Goa in 1608.

##### St. Paul's Church

Constructed by the Portuguese captain, Duarte Coelho, this church was named "Our Lady of The Hill", but was later turned into a burial ground by the Dutch for their noble dead, and renamed "St. Paul's Church". Currently the church is part of the Malaccan Museums Complex. The body of St. Francis Xavier was interred here temporarily before it was taken to Goa, India.

##### Christ Church

Constructed in 1753, the structure reflects original Dutch architecture. The building houses hand-crafted church benches, jointless ceiling skylights, a copper replica of the Bible, a headstone written in the Armenian language, and a replica of "The Last Supper".

##### Francis Xavier Church

This Gothic church was built by a French priest, Rev. Fabre, in 1849, to commemorate St. Francis Xavier who is also known as the "Apostle of the East". St. Francis Xavier is credited for his Catholic missionary work in Southeast Asia during the 16th century.

##### Stadthuys

Constructed in 1650 as the residence of the Dutch Governor and his deputy, the structure reflects Dutch architecture. It is today the "Museum of History and Ethnography". The museum exhibits traditional wedding clothes and artifacts of Melaka, dating back to its days of glory.

##### Jonker Street (Jalan Hang Jebat)

This street is famous for its antique goods. It is also famous for its carnival-like atmosphere during weekend nights.

##### Portuguese Square

Perhaps the right phrase to infer strong affinity to Portugal would be 'Mini Lisbon'. Located within the Portuguese Settlement, the square is the culmination of Portuguese culture in its full splendour and colours.

##### Cheng Hoon Teng

Oldest Chinese temple in Malaysia.

In order to attract more tourists to Malacca, the State government has built a number of museums to house its rich cultural heritage.

Source: Wikipedia.org