WEATHER

Hot and humid throughout the year with occasional rainfall, Malacca is perfect for year-round travel. Temperatures range between 30°C - 35°C during the day and 27°C - 29°C at night, though after rainfall it could be cooler. Rainfall occurs mostly between October and March while May to July remains the state’s drier months. Wear light clothing, good walking shoes and sunglasses; and you’d be remiss to forget your sun block – the higher the SPF the better!

http://www.malacca.ws/info/weather.htm

CURRENCY

The Malaysian currency is the Ringgit Malaysia (MYR or RM). USD$1 roughly converts into MYR 3.00 – you’ll find up-to-date conversion rates at the top banner of malacca.ws website.

TIME ZONE

Malaysia is eight hours ahead of GMT +8 (the same as China, Hong Kong and Singapore).

ELECTRICITY

Main voltage in Malaysia is 220 volts. Connect to the reliable electricity supply (220V-240V, 50 cycles) with a UK-type three-square-pin or two-parallel-flat-pin (British BS-1363) plugs.

SIM CARDS AND DIALING PREFIXES

Malaysia’s three main cell phone service providers are Celcom, Digi and Maxis. You can obtain prepaid SIM cards almost anywhere – especially inside large-scale shopping malls. Digi and Maxis are the most popular services, although Celcom has the most widespread coverage in Sabah and Sarawak. Each state has its own area code; to make a call to a landline in KL, dial 03 followed by the eight-digit number. Calls to mobile phones require a three-digit prefix, (Digi = 016, Maxis = 012 and Celcom = 019) followed by the seven digit subscriber number.

GETTING AROUND

Malacca’s a fairly small town with most tourist-worthy sightseeing spots located in close proximity to each other. Getting around on foot seems to be a popular choice for most tourists although there are plenty of transportation options. To start with there’s a town bus service – the Melaka Central bus station is sited opposite the big Tesco supermarket along Jalan Tun Razak. Alternatively, hop on and off as you please, with the Melaka Panorama shuttle service which runs a circuit to popular tourist sites. Self drive cars are a good choice for tourists as it provides air conditioned respites from the heat between sightseeing spots – book one in advance at http://www.malacca.ws/car-rental. Taxis are ubiquitous but they don’t operate using the metre and trishaws for rent can mostly be found around the colourful Stadhuys precinct.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

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<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Stop Crisis Centre</td>
<td>+603 2615 3333</td>
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<tr>
<td>AirAsia Airline</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Malacca’s airport, the Batu Berendam International Airport, is located nine km from town but currently there are only four weekly connections with Pekanbar, Indonesia. Most people who aim to head to Malaysia’s historic capital either make the relatively-painless overland journey by car or bus. It goes without saying that the two-hour journey 150 km south of KL is best enjoyed with a car – book one in advance at http://www.malacca.ws/car-rental. There are numerous buses plying the KL-Malacca route; a direct shuttle bus departs from the KLIA LCCT seven times a day. The railway line doesn’t run through Malacca – it stops at Tampin (40 km north of town) and then you’ll have to take a taxi.

http://www.malacca.ws/info/airport.htm
MALACCA AREA GUIDES

Long before it fell prey to successive takeovers by colonial forces Malacca was a flourishing, cosmopolitan port city. These days the state's sightseeing appeal has led it to become one of the country's top tourist draws. From a rich colonial core, with well-preserved heritage architecture (A'Famosa Fort and the Stadhuys) to a varied array of houses of worship (Cheng Hoon Teng Temple) Malacca's a well-accepted tourist destination.

1. Malacca City

Malacca City's Dutch colonial square is perhaps its most striking feature. The terracotta-red buildings along this riverfront are unique due to their louvred windows, chunky doors and wrought iron grilles plus the imposing Stadhuys is the oldest surviving Dutch building in the East. The administrative capital of Malacca, a short walk over a concrete bridge at the southern end leads to Jalan Hang Jebat, which plays host to the Jonker Walk night market as well as a vast collection of antique shops. Southeast from the Stadhuys is the remnants of the Portuguese A'Famosa fort – the lone Porta de Santiago gate.

2. Jalan Hang Jebat

A bridge at the southern end of Dutch Square leads to Jalan Hang Jebat. It's commonly known as Chinatown or Jonker Street and used to be famous for its collection of antique stores that sell Nonya porcelain, Victorian mirrors, wooden opium beds, Peranakan blackwood furniture inlaid with mother-of-pearl and more. Within the area is Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock (also known as Melaka's Millionaire's Row) which is lined with opulent 19th century ancestral homes and mansions. The fun and zingy Friday-and Saturday Jonker Walk night market, that sells everything from tasty treats to cheap keepsakes, takes place here.

3. Ayer Keroh

Situated just off the highway to KL, about 11km northeast of Malacca City, is Ayer Keroh. It's known for its contrived tourist attractions ranging from the Melaka Zoo, with a worthwhile night-viewing safari, and the Melaka Butterfly & Reptile Sanctuary, to a go-kart track and the Ayer Keroh Golf & Country Club – the longest golf course in Malaysia. Housing a 359ha forest, there's also a Taman Mini Malaysia Complex (13 traditional houses, representing Malaysian states, with works of art and culture in each) and a Taman Mini ASEAN, showcasing abodes of Asian nations. Take bus no. 19 from Malacca City to get here.

4. Tanjung Kling

20 minutes from Malacca City, about 9km northwest, the journey to Tanjung Kling is a pleasant drive past beachside kampungs. It used to be a mucky, muddy seaside strip with passing tankers spoiling the beach. However, recent progress (the development of seafront apartment complexes and a cleaned-up beach) has resulted in a new and improved Tanjung Kling. These days you'll see people on the reclaimed beach sunning, flying kites and there's even a horse riding operator here. Plus, Tanjung Kling's the best spot in Malacca for seafood with several top notch restaurants and hawker stalls along the roadside at Pantai Kundor.

5. Malacca Raya

Situated within Malacca City, Taman Melaka Raya isn't a separate area in and of itself. It's popular as the town's favoured food centre especially since, besides a few places in Chinatown, it's hard to find many restaurants open late at night. It used to house the 60m Eye on Malaysia (which provided 360-degree views of the town centre) until it was dismantled due to a legal dispute. None the worse for the wear, the area will soon see the assembly of a newer, larger Ferris wheel called the Malaysia Eye (December 2011). Malacca's two biggest shopping malls – Mahkota Parade and Dataran Pahlawan – are located here.

6. Pulau Besar

Located about 13km from the mainland, Pulau Besar is an exclusive beach-resort island just off the coast of Malacca. Popular at weekends, it was once famous as a burial ground for Muslim traders and missionaries, and though tourism authorities have enthusiastically promoted its historic sites (very old graves, wells and Japanese-occupation bunkers and dynamite stores) the quiet island attracts tourists largely because of its relaxed pleasures. Leisurably traffic-free pursuits can be found along the island's beaches and hills, where there are plenty of jungle treks, and its compact size (16km²) makes it easy to explore.

More at http://www.malacca.ws/areas.htm
BEST LUXURY HOTELS

1. Casa Del Rio ★★★★★
   Situated at the mouth of the Malacca River, nearby the Stadhuys and Jonker Street, Casa del Rio is a five-star venture with Mediterranean and Peranakan-inspired, wooden floor lodgings. Each room features a private balcony, air conditioning, flat screen TV, DVD and CD player, Wi-Fi and I-Pod docking station. The sister property of the beautiful Casa del Mar in Langkawi, hotel facilities include an outdoor pool, a gym, three restaurants and bars, an on-site spa, a ballroom and seven meeting rooms.

2. The Majestic Melaka ★★★★★
   The five-star Majestic Melaka is easily one of the state’s most luxurious hotels. The lobby is housed in a 1920s colonial-style mansion at the forefront while the bulk of the hotel is in a modern high-rise building behind it. A blend of colonial elegance and Asian elements, its 54 air-conditioned rooms feature hardwood floors, teakwood fittings, gossamer drapes, marble-floor bathrooms with claw-footed bathtubs, intricate artwork and flat-screen TVs. Hotel facilities include a pool, three restaurants and bars and a gym, spa and library.
   http://www.asiawebdirect.com/malaysia/malacca/others--city-centre/the-majestic-malacca/

3. Hatten Hotel Melaka ★★★★★
   Massive and modern, Hatten Hotel Malacca is an ideal choice if you're looking for a place to stay in an accessible location. Boasting over 700 guest rooms and suites, Hatten is one of the biggest hotels in the UNESCO World Heritage city, and in a prime spot too - it sits right on top of its sister property, Hatten Shoppes while being linked to Dataran Pahlawan shopping mall, and it is within walking distance to top tourist attractions such as Menara Taming Sari and A Famosa.
   http://www.asiawebdirect.com/malaysia/malacca/melaka-raya/hatten-hotel-melaka/

BEST HERITAGE HOTELS

1. Hotel Puri Melaka ★★★
   With 180 stylish rooms furnished with comfy beds, work desks, iPod docking stations, in-room internet access, a 37-inch flat-screen TV in the room and a 19-inch flat screen in the bathroom, G Hotel snags the top spot as the city centre’s best business hotel. Sporting artsy fixtures, the five-star venture is located adjacent to the Ampang Park LRT station making it easily accessible to popular tourist destinations such as the Petronas Twin Towers, Suria KLCC and the KL Convention Centre.

2. The Baba House ★★★
   Located along Jalan Tun Cheng Lock in Malacca’s Chinatown, The Baba House is a three-star venture comprising a row of well-restored Peranakan shop houses. The recently renovated establishment has 60 rooms with air conditioning, attached bathrooms and TVs. One of our Top Ten Best Malacca Hotels, it’s a heritage spot due to a gorgeous interior with beautiful, intricate tile work, heavily-embellished hardwood furniture, engraved panels and a beautiful courtyard garden. There’s Wi-Fi available in the lobby and a small café within the hotel.
   http://www.asiawebdirect.com/malaysia/malacca/jonkers-st/the-baba-house/

3. Jonker Boutique Hotel ★★★★
   It’s not as rich in heritage as Hotel Puri or The Baba House, but the three-star Jonker Boutique is perhaps the most eye-catching structure along Jonker Street. Each high-ceilinged, air conditioned room is bedecked with trendy, contemporary furnishings and fixtures, attached bathrooms, teakwood floors, flat-screen TVs and free Wi-Fi. Hotel facilities are limited but the property’s located within Malacca’s Chinatown district so tourist-worthy sights are never too far away.

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BEST BOUTIQUE HOTELS

1. The Settlement Hotel ★★★★★
   The Settlement Hotel is quite a surprising find - a five-star place located along Jalan Ujong Pasir in Malacca City, set in a post-war 1960s mansion. Beautifully-restored utilising natural aged wood, natural stone and salvaged ceramics, it is a mix of neo-classical architecture and a quirky collection of Peranakan-inspired furniture.
   http://www.asiawebdirect.com/malaysia/malacca/others-_city-centre/the-settlement-hotel/

2. The Sterling Boutique Hotel Melaka ★★★★★
   Located in the historical Heritage Malacca town on Jalan Temenggong, the hotel is a mere 5 minute walk to historical and cultural tourism attractions such as Jonker Street and The Stadhuys. The Sterling is just a stone throw away, nestled between heritage pre-war shop houses. The discrete yet commanding whitewashed building has 37 luxuriously designed rooms and two very unique food and beverage outlets.

3. Gingerflower Boutique Hotel ★★★★★
   The Gingerflower Boutique Hotel is a small luxury boutique hotel housed in a tastefully restored Peranakan townhouse within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Melaka. Retaining the gracious old world charm of a 19th century cultural and architectural treasure while offering contemporary luxury to ensure a comfortable stay, the Gingerflower Boutique Hotel will appeal to all guests wishing to be swept up in the cultural splendour of an elegant by-gone era, while indulging in some of the finer luxuries of contemporary living.

BEST MID-RANGE HOTELS

1. Midcity Hotel Melaka ★★★
   Midcity Hotel Melaka, the latest addition to the rapidly growing tourism industry in Malaysia. Situated in the heart of Historical City of Melaka and only 18km from the North-South Highway interchange. The Hotel is designed specially to pamper you with luxurious comforts. You can choose from the available total of 96 spacious rooms and suites stylishly furnished for your comfort, all with windows offering spectacular views to the Straits of Melaka or the City.

2. MIO Boutique Hotel ★★★
   The hotel is right in the centre of Malacca which is 30 minute drive from the Ayer Keroh exit. Cultural and heritage sites like St Pauls hill, Standhuys, Jonker Street, Kampung Morten, Malacca River ferry all are a mile stone distance. Its located off at Jalan Bunga Raya, next to prestigious development known as The Shore adjacent to Malacca River.
   http://www.asiawebdirect.com/malaysia/malacca/others-_city-centre/mio-boutique-hotel/

3. The Explorer Hotel Melaka ★★★
   Conveniently located in Malacca / Melaka, The Explorer Hotel is a great base from which to explore this vibrant city. The hotel lies 0.00 Km from the city center and provides accessibility to important town facilities. No less exceptional is the hotels easy access to the citys myriad attractions and landmarks, such as Mahkota Parade, Golden Screen Cinemas, Mahkota Medical Center..
   http://www.asiawebdirect.com/malaysia/malacca/melaka-raya/the-explorer-hotel-melaka-malaysia/

Malacca’s historic sites are an alluring lot. When Malaysia’s other renowned holiday destinations – Langkawi, Penang – were just sleepy backwaters, Malacca had already risen to fame to become one of the richest and most successful port cities in Asia. Today the town is no longer a bee hive of activity – instead it’s focused on preserving its rich colonial past; be it the ruins of a fortress or recreated sunken ships, Malacca’s historic sites are an alluring lot.

### WHAT TO SEE IN MALACCA

Formerly known as Jonker Street, Jalan Hang Jebat is Chinatown’s centre street and Malacca’s most renowned thoroughfare. Peranakan architecture here is some of the best in the state and the area was once known for its collection of antique stores selling Peranakan-style furniture, Nyonya porcelain and more. The Friday- and Saturday Jonker Walk night market – is one of Malacca’s highlights.

**Open:** 17:00 – late  
**Location:** Chinatown  
**How to get there:** Walk south from Dutch Square or take a trishaw

#### 2. Jalan Munshi Abdullah – Stadhuys
Jalan Munshi Abdullah runs through the middle of Malacca’s commercial district. Its best known for the Dutch Square’s Stadhuys building, characterised by terracotta-red walls, louvered windows, heavy wooden doors and beautifully-wrought iron grilles. Situated on the east bank of the river, it’s the oldest-surviving Dutch building in the East. Besides a history, cultural museum and Malaysia’s oldest Protestant church (Christ Church), this precinct is a favourite trishaw pick-up point.

**Address:** Town centre  
**How to get there:** Bus 17 from the Melaka Sentral station

#### 3. A’Famosa Fort
Heading down from St. Paul’s Hill, you’ll reach the Porta de Santiago, the remains of the Portuguese-built A’Famosa fort. Built in 1511, it housed the entire Portuguese administration during their tenure in Malacca. Many say the lone gate is nothing more than a quick photo stop opportunity but in truth the sprawling fort’s ruined Romanesque architecture, peculiarly if you make the trek to the top, is worth an afternoon’s exploration.

**Address:** Jalan Kota  
**How to get there:** Walk up St. Paul’s hill, behind the Stadhuys, and then head downhill the other side.

#### 4. St. Paul’s Church
The largest and oldest Chinese graveyard outside of China, Bukit Cina is the ancestral burial ground of Malacca’s Chinese community. Also known as Chinese Hill, it has more than 12,500 graves and these days the 20ha hill is primarily used as a jogging track. The burial ground’s fame began with the marriage of Sultan Mansur Shah of Malacca to the Ming emperor’s daughter, Princess Hang Liu.

**Location:** Jalan Kota, Bukit St. Paul (St. Paul’s Hill)  
**How to get there:** Walk up the stair case behind A’Famosa Fort, the St. Paul’s Church is just up of the hill.

#### 5. Baba Nyonya Heritage Museum
Malacca’s known for its Peranakan architecture and Jalan Tun Cheng Lock (Malacca’s Millionaire’s Row) plays host to the state’s finest ancestral homes. One of the most opulent of these homes is the 19th-century Baba Nyonya Heritage Museum – a well-preserved traditional Peranakan town house.

**Open:** 10:00 – 12:30 & 14:00 – 16:30 Monday - Saturdays  
**Address:** 48-50 Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock.  
**Phone:** 606 283 1273  
**How to get there:** From Dutch square, head south over the concrete bridge

#### 6. Cheng Hoon Teng Temple
Built in 1645, Cheng Hoon Teng Temple is Malaysia’s oldest traditional Chinese temple. Literally the ‘Temple of the Evergreen Clouds’, it’s dedicated to Kuan Yin (the Goddess of Mercy) and craftsmen were imported from China to build it. The interior contains dark timber beams, wood carvings and lacquer work and the heavy, saddled roofs are decorated with mythological figures, flowers and birds. The main altar houses a solid bronze image of Kuan Yin that was brought in from India in the 19th century.

**Open:** 07:00 – 19:00  
**Address:** No. 25, Jalan To’kong  
**Phone:** +606 282 9343 or +606 282 2906  
**How to get there:** Taxi

#### 7. Butterfly & Reptile Sanctuary
Situated approximately 15 kilometres northeast of Malacca town, the Butterfly & Reptile Sanctuary is one of the most visited attractions in Ayer Keroh. Also known as Taman Rama-Rama & Reptilia Melaka, it is home to a collection of animals ranging from beautiful butterflies to more than 20 species of snakes as well as lizards, crocodiles, colourful koi fish, not to mention a few prickly hedgehogs.

**Address:** Lebuh Ayer Keroh  
**How to get there:** From Malacca town, you can get to Ayer Keroh either by bus or taxi

#### 8. Melaka River
A good way to take a rest from pavement pounding, the lazy, 10km riverboat cruise down the Melaka River takes you past some key Malaccan sightseeing spots. Heading towards the sea, it’s a 45-minute cruise that starts out nearby Dutch square and sails past Kampung Morten (a national heritage site) and the Chan Boon Cheng bridge – an overpass with a gruesome history (during the Japanese occupation, soldiers placed the beheaded heads of victims at the foot of the bridge).

**Address:** Malacca river jetty in front of the Quayside Heritage Centre  
**How to get there:** Taxi

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WHAT TO DO IN MALACCA

While Langkawi is renowned for its tourist-friendly beaches and Penang is the food capital of the country, Malacca – one of Malaysia's tourism trump cards – offers something different. Joining the ranks of UNESCO-listed World Heritage Sites such as the Vatican City, Ayutthaya and the District of Old Québec, it features a good list of well-preserved heritage architecture and historical sites.

1. Malacca Duck Tour

Tour Duration: 45-60 mins

A family-friendly, one-hour journey on a sunshine-yellow WWII transport truck, the Malacca Duck Tour isn’t one of those tours jam packed with historic facts and figures. Instead it’s a breezy way to see the state from a whole new angle – after taking you past the Maritime Museum and the Royal Malaysian Navy Museum – the vehicle goes splashing into the Straits of Melaka and from here you'll get to see Pulau Melaka and Masjid Selat (the Floating Mosque). Book now, call +603 2302 7555

2. D’ Paradise Tour

If you fancy the idea of meeting Malaysia’s indigenous tribes, then the D’ Paradise Tour is the way to go. Taking you on an excursion to the D’Paradise Tropical Fruit World and Aboriginal Village, this tour allows you to explore the 168-acre property which features one of the world’s largest collections of tropical, sub-tropical and continental fruits (including the world’s largest pumpkin). Besides tasting the sumptuous fruits you’ll enjoy a cultural performance by an authentic indigenous tribe. Book now, call +603 2302 7555

3. Malacca Full-Day Excursion – Jalan Tokong Besi

Tour Duration: 4hrs

Though Malacca’s famous for its booming Baba Nyonya culture, the nation’s three major faiths – Malay, Chinese and Indian – still thrive. It comes as no surprise that the state has more than a few ornate temples; Jalan Tokong Besi is the avenue to head to if you want to see them. Besides the popular Cheng Hoon Teng Temple, you’ll also be able to visit the Kampung Keling Mosque (sporting a three-tiered roof instead of the conventional dome) and the Sri Payattha Vinayagar Moorthi temple (one of the first Hindu temples in Malaysia) on this tour. Book now, call +603 2302 7555

4. Menara Taming Sari

The country’s first revolving gyro tower, Menara Taming Sari is one of Malacca’s kitschiest attractions. Located beside the Dataran Pahlawan shopping centre, it obviously aims to draw in the tourist crowd, but surprisingly does roaring good business with all groups. The cabin takes groups of tourists 80m to the top, and then slowly turns 360 degrees, before descending. You’ll see plenty of families with kids lining up to have a go and the sights at the apex make the queues worthwhile.

Open: 10:00 – 22:00 - Address: Jalan Melaka, Bandar Hilir - Phone: +606 288 1100 or + 606 281 3366

5. A' Famosa Resort

A sprawling 520ha water park, located approximately 24km north of Malacca City, A’Famosa Resort comprises a hotel with an on-site indoor and outdoor theme park as well as an international championship golf course. Besides the popular wet theme park, there’s the 60ha Animal World Safari which houses a collection of camels, elephants, giraffes, lions, tigers, zebras and more. Plus, there’s Cowboy Town – an old west theme park popular for its beer garden with cowboys, cowgirls and country songs.

Open: 09:00 – 23:00 - Address: Alor Gajah - Phone: +603 2781 8888

6. Gunung Ledang

Fairly-new Melaka Wonderland Theme Park is popular for its high-speed water slides and thrill rides. Located in Ayer Keroh, it's surrounded by 360ha of natural recreational forest and all in all, there are over 16 attractions including the Lazy-Cum-Crazy River, 1 Big Wave pool, Adventure Island, Anaconda Twist, The Pendulum and more. A great way to spend a wet day in the sun, dry park rides includes the Tornado Chaser and the Kamikaze Racer.

Address: Just within Johor state

7. Malacca Wonderland Theme Park

Pulau Ketam, or ‘Crab Island’ as it is called, is a unique island that is completely made of mangrove swamps with a village built on stilts nestled inside it. The island was named after the thousands of tiny crabs that appear on the shores during low tide. What makes Pulau Ketam fascinating is that a visit here is like a journey back in time, where Chinese traditions, wooden homes and fishing are very much a part of life.

Open: 10:00 – 19:00 Weekday; 09:00 am – 19:00 Weekend & Public Holiday - Address: Ayer Keroh, Melaka (approximately 15 minutes from the Ayer Keroh exit toll)

8. Tanjung Kling - Kite-Flying/ Elephant & Horse-Riding

Named after the Tamil immigrants from Madras who first populated this village, Tanjung Kling was once an area filled with grey-looking beaches and a less-than-inviting sea. Progressive urban development recently saw the rise of several apartment complexes in the area and the result is a seaside strip that’s thoroughly popular with the young local crowd and tourists. Formerly known as Pantai Kundur, you’ll see kids flying kites plus there are operators along this strip for horse-riding excursions.

Address: Eight km from Malacca City

WHAT TO EAT IN MALACCA

Penang may be Malaysia’s unofficial food capital but Malacca’s cuisine isn’t particularly unknown. Home to a thriving Baba Nyonya culture (descendants of 15th and 16th-century Straits Chinese settlers who married local Malays), Malacca’s food scene has been thoroughly saturated by the Peranakan culture. Curries are lighter than Indian ones, vegetables are flavoursome and meats are neither spicy nor bland making Nyonya cuisine perfect for first-time visitors.

1. Nyonya Food
   Malacca’s Nyonya fare is the original and most authentic of the country’s Peranakan cuisine. Heavily influenced by Chinese and Malay ingredients, some of the most common ingredients in Nyonya cuisine are coconut milk, lemon grass, turmeric, screw pine leaves, chillies and sambal. Besides main meals, Malacca’s Nyonya pineapple tarts are uniquely popular – sinfully delicious, there are many stores scattered across Malacca’s landscape selling these pastries and locals will happily point you in the direction of their favourite stores if you ask them. Try San Shu Gong Food Industries’ (Jonker Street) heavenly double-buttered tarts.

2. Satay Celup
   A Malaccan institution, satay celup is a fondue-style meal with skewered raw and semi-cooked meats (such as chicken, beef, pork and seafood) that are cooked in a communal pot of scalding hot, thick peanut-based gravy. Besides the meats, there’s also a variety of vegetables including tofu, kangkung and more for customers to choose from. The restaurant prepares the skewered meats and vegetables and stores them in huge refrigerators – customers select their satay and then dip it into the boiling sauces to stew. The best places (Restoran Capitol, Restoran Ban Lee Siang) feature thicker, nuttier sauce than that of other places.

3. Chicken Rice Ball
   The state’s unofficial signature dish, this meal comprises rice, cooked in chicken stock, and moulded into golf ball-sized balls and served with delicious steamed chicken in soy sauce. It’s a simple dish yet it receives rave reviews, in large part due to its relative non-spiciness as well as subtle-yet-strong flavours. The best chicken rice ball restaurants are usually busy during lunchtime and dinner (the queues are well worth it though), so you’ll have to arrive early if you want to grab a table. Try Kedai Kopi Chung Wah and Hoe Kee (Jalan Hang Jebat) – they serve up some of the best chicken rice balls in the state.

4. Ikan Bakar
   Don’t leave Malacca without trying the ikan bakar (literally burnt fish in Malay). This grilled seafood dish has roots in Indonesia but the smoky flavour remains the same wherever you go. The fish (stingray) is marinated for hours with spices and sambal belacan (anchovy and chilli paste) and then grilled to perfection with banana leaves over a charcoal fire; a variation of this dish uses sotong (squid). It’s topped with healthy lashings of sambal sauce and sliced shallots; though it’s said to be a street snack (usually found with hawker stalls), in Malacca there are a few restaurants that specialize in it.

5. Fried Oysters
   Best eaten piping hot, fried oysters are a favourite Chinese dish with Teochew Fujian origins and you’ll see this dish sold in almost all seafood restaurants, hawker centres and pasar malams in Malacca. Shucked oysters are stir fried with scrambled eggs, sliced onions, diced garlic, chives, chilli paste and soy sauce – the result is a soft, sticky and flavoursome dish. The best place to grab a plate is the Jonker Walk night market – the cook who stir fries the oysters in a large wok (on the spot) will take requests – so you can tell him if you don’t want the dish too spicy and he’ll be more than willing to oblige.

6. Durian Cendol
   The sinfully-sweet cendol is a quintessential part of Malacca’s street food culture. Made from coconut milk, lots of gula Melaka (palm sugar) and served with red beans, glutinous rice, grass jelly, creamed corn and pandan-flavoured worm-like ‘jellies’ (made from rice flour and dyed with green food colouring), cendol’s relative popularity makes it easy to find. You’ll come across an array of variants, the most popular one in Malacca being durian cendol. You would think that the durian-flavoured shaved ice drink would be an acquired taste but visitors say that after their first bowl, they’re left craving more.

7. Roti John
   Essentially an omelette sandwich, Roti John is a popular street side snack (Malays are especially partial to it) in Malacca. Minced chicken, diced onions, eggs and diced red and green chillies are fried, then spread on a baguette loaf with tomato and chilli sauce and then grilled. Variations of this dish use beef, mutton and sardines. The seaside strip of Pantai Kundur plays host to more than a few hawker stalls that are Malacca’s roti john specialists.

8. Nasi Lemak
   Malaysia’s official national dish, nasi lemak is so popular even the Chinese and Indians serve their own versions. At its very basic, nasi lemak comprises a plate of white rice cooked with coconut milk and pandan leaves. Accompanying it is sambal (anchovy, onion and chilli paste), an egg (boiled or fried), salted anchovies, cucumber slices and peanuts; popular complementary side orders include fried, curry or rendang chicken or beef. Locals say that this dish can be eaten no matter the time of day but tourists should be careful as the sambal can be rather spicy – keep a glass of ice water nearby when you dig in.

BEST DINING EXPERIENCES

Malacca may be known for its Nyonya fare but its range of cuisine doesn’t just stop there. From Malay favourites such as ikan bakar to chicken rice balls (the state’s unofficial signature dish), Malaccan food entices just about everyone. The best restaurants are located within the popular Malacca Raya suburb, but you’ll also find a host of good eateries along Jalan Hang Jebat, Chinatown.

1. Restoran Nyonya Makko

It’s nearly criminal to leave Malacca without sampling a good Nyonya meal and it’s fairly immoral to skip out on a visit to Nyonya Makko. Locals rave that it’s the best Nyonya fare in the state and we’re inclined to agree. Run by a fourth generation Malaccan Nyonya, it’s located within the Malacca Raya precinct; highly recommended, the mouth watering dish selections are extensive, prices are cheap and staff members are friendly, polite and efficient.

Open: 11:30 – 14:45 (lunch) 18:00 – 21:30 (dinner) everyday except Tuesday Address: 123 Jalan Merdeka, Taman Melaka Raya, Off Jalan Parameswara, Bandar Hilir Tel: +606 283 0737

2. Restoran Ban Lee Siang/ Restoran Capitol

If you’re looking to try out Malacca’s delicious satay celup, locals will point you in two directions. Either way, you won’t be disappointed by the fare; very much recommended, it’s best to arrive early at both of these restaurants to snag a coveted table. Patrons often have to wait in long queues for available spots at the more popular Capitol Satay, while Restoran Ban Lee Siang may be difficult for out-of-towners to locate, though the effort is worth it.

Open: 17:00 – late Address: Ban Lee Siang 45 Jalan Ong Kim Wee; Capitol 41 Lorong Bukit Cina Tel: Ban Lee Siang +606 284 1935; Restoran Capitol: +606 283 5508

3. Kedai Kopi Chung Wah

A local specialty, tourists just can’t seem to get enough of chicken rice balls. Perhaps it’s due to its non-spicy nature or maybe it’s purely because of its simple-yet-tasty flavour. Whatever the case, chicken rice ball restaurants are rapidly mushrooming all over Malacca’s landscape and the best one is Kedai Kopi Chung Wah. Featuring wooden floors and cooling ceiling fans, its popular with workers during lunchtime so you’ll have to arrive early or you’ll be waiting a long time for a table.

Address: 28-30, Jalan Hang Kasturi Tel: +606 286 0121

4. Medan Ikan Bakar Muara Sungai Duyung Melaka

Medan Ikan Bakar Muara Sungai Duyung certainly doesn’t disappoint in terms of dishes and the environment. Situated near the Straits of Malacca (from the restaurant you can see fishing boats heading out to sea in the evenings) it is, hand’s down, the best place for seafood in the state. Select your seafood (fish, prawns, squid and more) and then decide what style you’d like it cooked in. Try the sambal calamari, succulent prawns and grilled fish; there’s also nasi lemak and a secret sauce for the seafood.

Open: 17:00 – 24:00 Address: KM 4-5, Jalan Padang Temu, Permatang Pasir Tel: +6010 225 8741

5. Amigo Steak & Grill

One of Taman Malacca Raya’s finest eateries, the breezy Amigo Steak & Grill is the first place in town to go to satisfy international fare cravings. Perfect for homesick foreigners, it’s usually packed to the gills (especially on the weekends). A well crafted ambiance of creaseless linen, casual plastic furniture, non-intrusive service and flavoursome Western and Japanese standards (mozzarella chicken, roast rack of lamb, sizzling black pepper chicken), Amigo provides a laid-back dining experience.

Open: 17:30 – 00:00 Address: 21-23 Jalan Melaka Raya 8, Taman Melaka Raya Tel: +606 283 2684 or +606 283 2686

6. Nadeje Patisserie

A compact café that specializes in a delicious mille crêpe, prices are a little steep at this cosy French-style bakery but the finely crafted ambience of walls lined with teapots, glasses and wine bottles, modern furniture and non-intrusive service make the desserts well worth their price tag. Besides their signature mille crêpe (which comes in a variety of flavours including cheese and green tea) there’s also cakes and tarts for sale. The café’s beverage selection includes flavoured teas (apple, strawberry, berry berry) and milkshakes.

Open: 10:00 – 22:00 Address: G-23 & 25, Jln PM4, Plaza Mahkota Tel: +606 284 3469

7. Klebang Beach

Just off the Jalan Klebang Besar road, Tanjung Kling’s beachside strip features a collection of hawker stalls that are extremely popular with the locals, especially those who’ve come to enjoy the sun, sea and sand for the day. These stalls sell a variety of fare but they’re best known as the ikan panggang or ikan bakar (grilled fish) specialists. Reassuringly tourist-friendly, these fish dishes are grilled to perfection and topped with sambal sauce – a less-spicy alternative is to forgo the sambal sauce topping as the marinated fish is incredibly flavoursome even without it.

Open: 17:00 – late Address: Tanjung Kling

8. Harper’s

Offering something for everyone, Harper’s is a riverside eatery (you can see monitor lizards in the Melaka River) that consistently fares well with visitors. Featuring high ceilings and some outdoor seating, its best to get a table near the windows as the cool breezes will make your meal even more pleasurable. The menu is a fusion of European and Nyonya cuisine but the restaurant is popular for its tapas selection; there are reasonably priced combo meals that pair a main course with a choice of tapas. The wine and beer list is fairly extensive.

Open: 12:00 – 15:00 Address: 2 Lorong Hang Jebat Tel: +606 286 6592

WHERE TO GO FOR NIGHTLIFE

Malacca’s nightlife scene is not as fluid and hopping as Kuala Lumpur’s. New nightspots continue to open but supply far outstrips demand and only a few of these places remain after a couple of months. First time visitors, should take note of old timers (Geographer Café, Ringo’s Classic Café) that have managed to survive the test of time; hotel bars are the old standbys and the Jonker Walk night market is a must-visit.

1. Jonker Street night market (Pasar Malam)
   It is a commonly acknowledged fact that Malacca’s Jonker Walk night market is the best in the country. Well organized with a wide array of stalls, polite and friendly hawkers and ubiquitous bargains all combine to draw in the crowds. When the market takes place every Friday and Saturday night, the handful of bars along this avenue does roaring good business with tables and chairs spilling out onto the five-foot walkways.
   **Open:** 17:00 – late Friday and Saturday **Address:** Chinatown

2. Geographer Café
   A breezy bar with outdoor seating, Geographer Café is a laid back venture that’s absolutely jammed at weekends. Open late for drinks, besides the thriving nightlife, this bistro is one of the best places to head to if you’re craving excellent, international standards. Housed in a well-restored pre-war corner shop lot, the fare is flavoursome and the menu extensive – there’s even a wide range of vegetarian meals.
   **Open:** 10:00 – 01:00 **Address:** 83 Jalan Hang Jebat **Phone:** +606 281 6813

3. Ringo’s Classic Café Malacca
   A dusty yet densely packed bar along Jonker Street, Ringo’s may not look like much from the outside but its one of the better places to grab a drink. It’s just around the corner from Geographer Café, but they’re incredibly different – while Geographer brings in a more upscale clientele, Ringo’s patrons are a colourful jumble of expats, local old timers and tourists.
   **Open:** 18:00 – 02:00 Friday, Saturday & public holidays **Address:** 11, Jalan Hang Lekir **Phone:** +606 354 2223

4. Jalan Melaka Raya
   Taman Melaka Raya houses a good number of the state’s best known nightspots. As a rule, the Eye on Malacca would make the list of after-dark attractions in the area but a recent legal dispute has resulted in the shut down of the giant Ferris wheel. However, a new and bigger wheel is scheduled to be opened here by the end of 2011. Jalan Melaka Raya, the main thoroughfare in this development, plays host to a good variety of nightclubs.
   **Address:** Taman Melaka Raya

5. Pure Bar
   Sporting an industrial grey façade, the brightly neon-lit Pure Bar is Malacca’s reining nightclub. Usually packed to the tee, it’s a university student-populated bar; the interior is sprinkled with bare tables and bar stools and music featured is usually mainstream R&B spun by resident deejays. For those who prefer the live music scene, there’s a Filipino band – Swerve – upstairs, playing cover tunes. Drinks are reasonably priced and Wednesdays are Ladies Night with free cocktails offered to women.
   **Open:** 9:00 – late Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday **Address:** Lot 591-593, Taman Melaka Raya **Phone:** +606 292 1282

6. Movida Kitchen Bar, Club & Lounge
   A resto-bar located in Hatten Square, Movida Kitchen Bar, Club & Lounge is one of the latest additions to Malacca’s nightlife scene. Fairly popular with the young and yuppie crowd, the interior is modern, nouvea-riche and the music is a ‘world mix’ – basically the latest techno beats. Serving up Italian, Mediterranean and Spanish fusion cuisine, the fare is reasonably priced for international standards and drinks are cheap, especially if you’re here for happy hour.
   **Address:** G.012, G.013 & G.013a, Hatten Square **Phone:** +606 292 1282

7. Arena: The Jetty - GoGo KTV Lounge / The Arena (Bar)
   A complex that houses fine dining restaurants, trendy cafés and a karaoke lounge, The Jetty is a prominent nightspot popular with visitors due to its convenient location. Stretching out towards the sea, it’s situated between Mahkota Hotel and Holiday Inn. Aspiring singers can belt out tunes at GoGo KTV Lounge and for those looking for a less Idol-esque night out.
   **Open:** Arena 18:00 – 02:00; GoGo 11:00 – 02:00 **Address:** 12-A, Jalan Syed Abdul Aziz **Phone:** Arena +6016 675 2000; GoGo +606 288 1788

8. Portuguese Square
   Three km east of Taman Melaka Raya, is Malacca’s Portuguese Square. Also known as Medan Portugis, it’s the site of a fairly-thriving Portuguese community – though the only thing belying their inherited culture now is their patios and surnames. Housing plenty of restaurants, food stalls and pubs (food and drinks are expensive) its popular because of its populace.
   **Address:** Jalan d’Albuquerque, Off Jalan Ujon Pasir **Phone:** +606 283 6538

WHERE TO SHOP

Jalan Bunga Raya and Jalan Munshi Abdullah form Malacca’s main modern shopping precinct, while Jalan Hang Jebat and Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock are the specialists in antiques that range from Nyonya tableware to HMV gramophones. Aside from the merchandise at mega shopping malls like Mahkota Parade and Dataran Pahlawan where prices are fixed, its acceptable to bargain – though, you shouldn’t really expect a dramatic reduction.

1. Jalan Hang Jebat - Jonker Street Night Market/ Antique Shopping

The definitive Malaccan shopping experience, Jalan Hang Jebat houses a collection of unique stores; once, there was even a cobbler renowned for making silk shoes for women with bound feet (a dwindling population) – that store’s now relocated to Jalan Tokong. Stores retailing beaded Nyonya shoes, china and glass, swords, unusual toys, artwork, old coins and bank notes, antiques (check that it’s authentic – you’ll have to fill out an official clearance form to export it legally), British bikes and old biker artefacts and a veritable variety of knick knacks can easily be found here.

Address: Chinatown

2. Orang Utan House

Established in 1992 as an art house gallery by Malacca-born artist Charles Cham, the Orang Utan House is a studio gallery for Charles’ works, but it’s the instantly-recognizable, brightly painted exterior that first catches your eye – it’s a sunshine yellow building with a huge orange utan painted on the outside. Inside there’s a collection of the artist’s contemporary paintings (all for sale) and even reasonably priced, funky and one-of-a-kind T-shirts that are extremely popular souvenirs. There are several outlets throughout Malacca.

Open: 10:00 – 18:00
Address: 59 Lorong Hang Jebat Phone: +606-282 6872

3. LW Nyonya Pineapple Tarts House

Saying that Lucy Wee Nyonya Pineapple Tarts House is popular is a bit of an understatement. The subject of many, many newspaper articles, the pastries here are, of course, undeniably tasty and at any given time, you’ll see crowds queueing up for a new batch of freshly-baked Nyonya pineapple tarts. There’s a gigantic, 35kg pineapple tart sitting just inside the entrance that’s earned LW a spot in Malaysia’s Book of Records. Owned by the husband and wife team – Teng and Lucy – the store has four other outlets spread across Malacca.

Address: 90, Jalan Tokong Phone: +606 281 1626 or +6017 678 1626

4. Hatten Square Suites & Shoppes

A behemoth complex that’s currently a favourite among Malaccan locals, the two-storey Hatten Square is a slick, new venture with over 200 high fashion stores and an IT superstore with outlets such as Apple, Acer, Nokia, LG, Garmin, and more. Topped by a posh hotel (with 700 lodging units and the largest ballroom in the state), the IT-centric retail centre is linked to Dataran Pahlawan Megamall via an air-conditioned pedestrian bridge.

Open: 10:00 – 22:00
Address: Jalan Merdeka, Bandar Hilir Phone: +606-283 2828 or +606-282 1828

5. Dataran Pahlawan

Housing a collection of upmarket designer shops, Dataran Pahlawan is another new addition to Malacca’s shopping landscape. Opposite Mahkota Parade, supermarket giant Carrefour is one of its anchor tenants and there’s a Golden Screen Cinema outlet on the top floor. Good Asian and Western dining options abound especially if you’re looking for pizza and sushi venues. There’s a mediocre food court on the lower ground floor and just down the road is the Menara Taming Sari and Duck Tour operator booths.

Open: 10:00 – 22:00
Address: Jalan Merdeka, Bandar Hilir Phone: +606 283 2828

6. Tan Kim Hock Product Centre

Adjacent to the four-star Royale Bintang Hotel, the Curve is a sprawling shopping complex connected to Ikea, IPC, Tesco and eCurve. Split into two areas – The Street (outlets which open up to the outdoors) and The Walk (outlets contained indoors), The Curve is noteworthy for its bustling all-day weekend flea market retailing a variety of knick-knacks and novelties.

Open: 9:00 – 20:00
Address: Lot 182, Jalan Laksamana Cheng Ho Phone: +606 281 283 5322

7. Mahkota Parade Shopping Mall

Mahkota Parade, one of Malacca’s oldest shopping centres, sports a very Western feel with plenty of international chain stores including Payless Shoe Source, Crocs and more. The mall recently underwent extensive renovations to revamp its façade; anchor tenants include Parkson Grand and Giant Supermarket. It’s won an award for the best shopping centre in the country and there’s a good choice of clothing boutiques, electronics stores, camera shops and more. There’s also a bowling alley and theatre.

Open: 10:00 – 22:00
Address: Jalan Merdeka, Bandar Hilir Phone: +606 282 615

8. San Shu Gong

Just across the concrete bridge from the Stadhuis (beside Kedai Kopi Chung Wah), San Shu Gong is a four-storey, brick-red building that’s easily identifiable. Close to the wildly popular Geographer Café, it’s no wonder that this store is a favourite place to stop over for Malaccan visitors. A compact store that sells a variety of Nyonya pastries – ranging from Nyonya pineapple tarts to black sesame biscuits – that is delicious and reasonably priced. Try the kuih bangkit and double-buttered Nyonya pineapple tarts.

Address: 33 Lorong Hang Jebat Phone: +606 286 8262 or +606 282 8381
TIPS AND GOOD TO KNOW

Do not ever leave home without...
1. An umbrella or raincoat for those unexpected showers.
2. Earplugs – to block out street noise when you stay at down-market hotels.
3. A bottle of water – Malaysia’s weather is hot and humid, so you have to be sure to hydrate properly.
4. A photocopy of your passport – you never know when you might be asked to produce identification.
5. A universal electric plug.

Gastronomic tips
The country’s staple dish is rice and noodles. Malaysian hawker fare is relatively safe but you should always take care not to dine out in the grungiest shops as their levels of cleanliness are ultimately debatable. When eating with your hands, wash them first and try to use your right hand; use utensils to take food from a communal plate, never your fingers. Muslims are forbidden from eating pork – and most of them are incredibly strict about this rule – so never offer pork to Muslims. Also don’t offer Muslims alcohol – although there are plenty who do partake in a little liquid indulgence now and again, especially the younger generation.

Measurements
Malaysia uses the metric system for weights and measurements.

Negotiate your socks off
You can usually bargain to get prices for merchandise reduced at street markets – sticker prices generally apply for items in shopping malls. If there’s no barcode or price tag, then by all means start negotiating. Keep in mind that you’ll catch more flies with honey than vinegar – smile as you parley and you’re more likely to get deeper discounts. The best way to get the best price on an item you’re coveting is to walk away – you’ll definitely be called back for last ditch haggling.

Taxi Scammers
There are unscrupulous taxi drivers in the city who love to take advantage of the purse strings of unsuspecting foreigners. These cabbies do not charge fares according to their taxi meters (as they are supposed to do) but charge inflated rates – the best way to deal with this is to refuse to pay the inflated price. Inform them that you are aware that they’re supposed to use the meter and demand that they charge you the proper fare. A good rule of thumb is to knock off at least RM5 from the inflated price – but be warned that it’s not a hard-and-fast rule; also be sure to take down the info of errant cabbies as you can report them to the authorities.

TV, Radio & Newspapers
The country only has two government TV channels (TV1 and TV2) and four commercial stations (TV3, NTV7, 8TV and TV9). In the Malacca area, radio stations include My FM (106.4 FM), Traxx FM (97.4 FM), HitZ FM (93.0 FM), Mix FM (91.1 FM), Fly FM (94.0 FM), Red FM (98.9 FM) and Light & Easy (92.2 FM). The country’s major newspapers include the News Straits Times, the Star and the Malay Mail.

Women Travellers
Malaysia’s a fairly liberal nation but rules of propriety still exist. Women are especially subjugated to the laws of convention and female tourists are encouraged to adhere to these standards. Dress modestly and try to blend in with the locals by being respectful, especially in areas of stronger Muslim religious sensibilities, such as the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia.

EASY MALAY PHRASES

Selamat Pagi = Good morning
Selamat tengah hari = Good afternoon
Selamat petang = Good evening
Selamat malam = Good night
Selamat tinggal = Good bye
Jumpa lagi = See you again
Apa khabar? = How are you?
Khabar baik = Fine, thanks
Ya = Yes
Tidak = No
Tolong/ Silakan = Please
Terima kasih (Terima kasih banyak banyak) = Thank you (Thank you very much)
Boleh/ Sama-sama = That’s fine! You’re welcome
Maaf = Excuse me! Sorry! Pardon – Maaf
Minta maaf = I’m sorry
Dari mana asal saudara? = Where are you from?
Saya datang dari.. = I come from...
Siapa nama anda? = What is your name?
Nama saya ialah... = My name is
Boleh cakap Bahasa English? = Can you speak English?
La – thoroughly colloquial, ‘la’ is a word that is frequently added to end of a sentence/phrase by locals when speaking either English of Malay. It is merely added for emphasis to just about everything and has no real meaning.