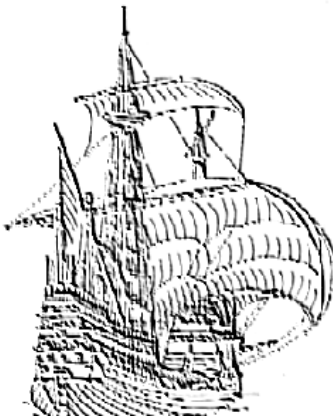


Malacca
eGuide



2008

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Overview

Malacca is situated in southern Peninsular Malaysia and lies seven degrees north of the equator. It lies between the continent of India to the West and China to the East.

The State of Malacca, (Melaka in Malay language), one of the fourteen states within Malaysia, is situated on the South-Western Coast of Peninsular Malaysia facing the Straits of Malacca and sandwiched between the states of Negeri Sembilan in the north and Johor in the south. The area of Malacca state is 1,658 square kilometers and is divided into three smaller districts, namely Melaka Tengah, Alor Gajah and Jasin.

The North-South Expressway allows easy access into Malacca from all states of Malaysia. It takes about two hours of travel by road (express bus) from the capital, Kuala Lumpur to Malacca and approximately three hours from Singapore to the south.



Malaysia's Location

Malacca also gives its name to the narrow straits of water called the Malacca Straits, where most of the ships traversing between East Asia (China, Japan) and the West (Europe, India and

Middle East) will have to pass. It is therefore an important center for trade and its history stretches from the fourteen century onwards. It became a prominent trading post when the Portuguese began to reach to the east for their supplies of silk and spices.

Malacca's and its neighboring (including Java and Moluccas Island) hinterlands was famous for its cultivation of spice plants which at first attracted the Indians, then the Arabs and later the Europeans.

At its heyday during the occupation of the Portuguese and later the Dutch, Malacca was known as the 'Venice of the East.' Malacca has so much history that it has been declared a 'historical city.' A look at its present population will revealed that there are at least seven major races of people living here, in a harmonious fashion that is not found any where else in the world. You will really have to see it with your own eyes to believe it.

There are Malays, Chinese, Indians, and Eurasians of Portuguese decent, English, Arabs and a small minority of Dutch. The various races have differing religions and they pray in different places of worships. There are Muslim temples, Taoist temples, Indian temples, Sikh temples, Christian churches and Buddhist temples scattered all over the place. Here, everyone co-exists in harmony. When you leave this historical place, you will inevitably wonder why other places which have been strived-torn did not adopt the wisdom of the people of this city!



Location of Malacca

Malacca is proud to offer you a mixture of the cultures of East and the West in a package that you can not find anywhere else. Malacca has also evolved into a city that has all the trappings of the twenty first century, so the modern day traveler, whether on leisure or business will find themselves very much at home.



State of Malacca

(Scroll down to the end of page to view a detailed usable map of Malacca town)

Besides, there are so many historical landmarks that the traveler will find it a great discovery place for an insight into the past, especially those forces that had shaped the world from the fourteen century onwards. For the avid traveler, Malacca should be enjoyed and discovered in a leisurely manner.

Most of the interesting places are concentrated in the city, and you can spend a whole week here and still wanting for more. Life here is absolutely leisurely, although there is a bit of traffic congestion during working hours. Just put on a pair of sandals and walk to your hearts content. You don't need to take a cab to visit all the places.

Malacca is a must place for the backpacker. Nowhere else will you find that many haversack toting travelers shooting off from their cameras! For the budget traveler, this city will offer most things at a very affordable price. Accommodations, food, and services are at the low end of things, as compared to cities like Tokyo Shanghai, Singapore, Bangkok and New Delhi.

For those who had retired, Malacca will offer the best environment for them to reminisce on their life. There is so much history here, five hundred over years and more. Not to be outdone, there are many facilities here for the business travelers as well. They can pack a satisfying business cum leisure trip to this most modern and cleanest of city.

Communication facilities are first rate. You can get free wireless access (WiFi) in most hotels, even budget ones. Malacca state will be seventy five

percent covered by WiFi (cheap) access by 2009 so all you have to do to stay connected is to be equipped with a WiFi enabled Pda phone.

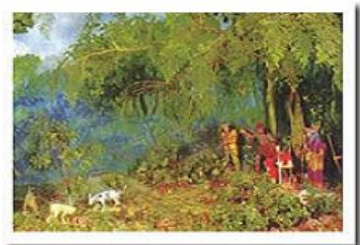
Malacca can be easily accessed by land, air and sea routes. You can make this your first stop in this country and take a side trip to the other cities. Everything here is good and cheap. There is no rip offs here. It also boasts of three first class medical hospitals that have attracted many medical tourists from neighboring countries.

When you come here, you will be well taken care of because you will find the people here very friendly and courteous. It has got something to do with the fact that the people here have been mingling with the people of the rest of the world for five hundred over years. Take time to enjoy your self. The friendliness of the locals here will make you remember them for a long time.

Malacca: History

Malacca a historical city

The first Sultanate, or Malay Kingdom in Peninsular Malaya, started here in Malacca. The story begins like this. According to the 16th century Malay Annals, the city was founded in 1400 by Parameswara, a Srivijayan prince, who was a Hindu and political fugitive from nearby Java Island across the straits. Fighting for control of territory was common then.



Parameswara's hunting trip

The legend goes that Paramswara who later became Raja Iskandar Shah was out on a hunt in the region and had stopped to refresh himself near what is now the Malacca River. Standing near a melaka (Indian gooseberry) tree, he was surprised to witness one of his hunting dogs so startled by a mouse deer that it fell into the river. Parameswara, who was wondering what to do, took this as a propitious sign of the weak overcoming the powerful. He then decided to build the capital of his new kingdom where he stood, naming it for the tree under which he had been resting. It was important that he set up his base so that he could at least regain part of kingdom that he lost in the south.

Another account says Malacca is derived from the Arabic word Malakat, meaning market. The Arabs began to use this half way house to trade with China in silk and spices, and there were the people who made Malacca known to the Europeans, who were beginning to explore the world outside their homelands then. To them, this was the 'market' to be in as they came here to source for luxurious items to sell to a burgeoning market in Arabia and a Europe that was eager to buy luxuries like silk and spices.



Legendary Malay warrior Hang Tuah

Malacca as ‘the Venice of the East’

Malacca had a navigable harbor sheltered by nearby Sumatra Island across the narrow straits, ample supply of fresh water, enjoyed a prime location relative to the shifting monsoon winds, and had a central location in regional trade patterns. This soon made it a prosperous trading center. Malacca was the place to rest and replenish for food and water for those indomitable sea farers at that time. Its fortunes increased with the sultan embracing Islam which was introduced by Indian traders of Gujarat in western India.

The Sultanate of Malacca was soon attracting Arab traders from far afield. However, Malacca continued to trade with merchants of all races and religions. After the visit of the Chinese Muslim Admiral Zheng He in the mid-15th century, contact between China and Malacca intensified.



Chinese Admiral Zheng He



A Chinese Junk

At this time, there were many jealous forces all eyeing Malacca's prime trading position. There were the powerful Siam kingdom in the north and the Majapahit Empire to the south.



Restored Malacca Sultanate Palace

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The Malacca sultanate was therefore worried about being attacked and taken

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