Get More From Your Trip

with easy-to-find phrases for every travel situation

Plus

Never get stuck for words with our quick reference dictionary

Get around with ease with our useful transport vocabulary

Avoid embarrassing situations with essential tips on culture & manners

25+ YEARS
Lonely Planet Phrasebooks have been connecting travellers and locals for over a quarter of a century

120+ LANGUAGES
Our phrasebooks and mobile apps cover more than any other publisher

4TH EDITION
Published March 2014
First Published November 1996

lonelyplanet.com
UK £4.99
USA $9.99

ISBN 978-1-74179-337-6

Over 10 Million Phrasebooks Sold
acknowledgments

about the author

Having lived in Malaysia on and off for 16 years, Susan Keeney first started to learn Malay in the kitchens and back rooms of obscure places like Kajang and Serdang. She wound up teaching communication courses (in both Malay and English) at various universities and colleges in Malaysia. She is now teaching elementary school students (in English) in California.

from the author

Many thanks to my three children, Johan (without whom this book would never have been finished on time), Sarah and Sabrina, for their help, advice and patience while I worked on this project. I would also like to thank my one and only guru tatabahasa, Awang Sariyan, who was a wonderful teacher and who certainly shared my love of grammar; and most of all, my father, Bob Keeney, for all his love and support.

from the publisher

The Malay phrasebook was edited by first time kite-fighter Meg Worby, who learned the rules from Senior Editors, Master of Games Karin Vidstrup Monk and Chief Top Spinner Karina Coates. Quizmaster Ben Handicott proofed the book and designer Patrick Marris finished the maze of layout in record time. His layout relay team mate, champion ‘Rubex cuber’ Belinda Campbell, was also the creator of the beaut illustrations, and they were both encouraged from the sidelines by vocal Senior Designer Fabrice Rocher. Natasha Velleley provided the competition map and Emma Koch expertly coached the steps of the traditional ‘dance of the dictionary’; medals must also go to Karin Vidstrup Monk, Sophie Putman, Ben Handicott and Karina Coates for their unbeatable expertise and assistance at the crucial stages. Tam Yewming and Kusnandar answered every question right. Publishing Manager Jim Jenkin left his competent fingerprint on the final layout and had the box seat for all the fun and games.

Special thanks to Sofie Jussof for the creation of the Sustainable Travel chapter.
Anyone can speak another language! It's all about confidence. Don't worry if you can't remember your school language lessons or if you've never learnt a language before. Even if you learn the very basics (on the inside covers of this book), your travel experience will be the better for it. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain when the locals hear you making an effort.

Finding things in this book

For easy navigation, this book is in sections. The Pronunciation and Grammar chapters are the ones you'll thumb through time and again. The Getting Around and Accommodation chapters cover basic travel situations like catching transport and finding a bed. The Meeting People chapter gives you conversational phrases and the ability to express opinions – so you can get to know people. Food has a section all of its own: gourmets and vegetarians are covered and local dishes feature. The Health and Emergencies chapters equip you with health and police phrases, just in case. Use the comprehensive Index to find everything easily. Otherwise, check the traveller's Dictionary for the word you need.

Being understood

 Throughout this book you'll see coloured phrases on each page. They're phonetic guides to help you pronounce the language. Start with them to get a feel for how the language sounds. The Pronunciation chapter will explain more, but you can be confident that if you read the coloured phrase, you'll be understood. As you become familiar with the spoken language, move on to using the actual text in the language which will help you perfect your pronunciation.

Communication tips

Body language, ways of doing things, sense of humour – all have a role to play in every culture. The aside boxes included throughout this phrasebook give you useful cultural and linguistic information that will help you communicate with the locals and enrich your travel experience.
# CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION .................................................... 9
- How to Use This Phrasebook ........................................ 12
- Abbreviations Used in This Book ................................. 12

## PRONUNCIATION .................................................. 13
- Stress ....................................................................... 15
- Transliteration System .............................................. 15

## GRAMMAR ............................................................. 19
- Word Order ............................................................. 19
- Articles ..................................................................... 19
- Nouns ..................................................................... 20
- Pronouns ................................................................. 20
- Adjectives ............................................................... 23
- Adverbs ................................................................... 25
- Verbs ....................................................................... 26
- To Be ....................................................................... 29
- To Have .................................................................... 30
- Modals ..................................................................... 30
- Imperatives ............................................................. 32
- Questions .................................................................. 32
- Question Words ...................................................... 34
- Answers ................................................................... 35
- Negatives ................................................................. 35
- Classifiers ............................................................... 36
- Prepositions ............................................................ 37
- Conjunctions ........................................................... 38

## MEETING PEOPLE ................................................... 39
- You Should Know ...................................................... 39
- Greetings & Goodbyes ............................................... 40
- Forms of Address ...................................................... 41
- First Encounters ....................................................... 42
- Making Conversation ................................................ 42
- Nationalities ............................................................ 46
- Cultural Differences .................................................. 47
- Age ......................................................................... 47
- Occupations ............................................................ 49
- Religion ................................................................. 50
- Body Language ....................................................... 53
- Feelings ................................................................... 54
- Breaking the Language .............................................. 55
- Staying in Touch ....................................................... 56
- Homestays ............................................................... 57

## GETTING AROUND .................................................. 59
- Finding Your Way ..................................................... 59
- Directions ............................................................... 60
- Addresses ............................................................... 61
- Buying Tickets ........................................................ 62
- Air .......................................................................... 63
- Bus ......................................................................... 65
- Train ....................................................................... 66
- Taxi ........................................................................ 68
- Boat ....................................................................... 69
- Car ......................................................................... 70
- Bicycle ..................................................................... 74
- Local Transport ....................................................... 76
## ACCOMMODATION

- Finding Accommodation ........................................ 77
- Booking Ahead ..................................................... 78
- Checking In ............................................................ 79
- Requests & Complaints ........................................... 82
- Checking Out .......................................................... 85
- Longer Stays ............................................................ 85

## AROUND TOWN

- Looking For .......................................................... 88
- At the Bank ............................................................. 89
- At the Post Office .................................................... 91
- Telecommunications ............................................... 93
- Sightseeing ............................................................. 96
- Paperwork .............................................................. 97

## GOING OUT

- Invitations ............................................................. 100
- Dating & Romance .................................................. 101

## FAMILY

- Questions ............................................................... 105
- Replies ................................................................. 106
- Family Members ..................................................... 107

## INTERESTS

- Common Interests .................................................. 109
- Politics ................................................................. 115
- Sport ................................................................. 111
- Music ................................................................. 116
- Writing Letters ..................................................... 113
- Crafts ................................................................. 116
- Social Issues ......................................................... 114
- Performing & Martial Arts ...................................... 118

## SHOPPING

- Looking For .......................................................... 119
- Making a Purchase ................................................ 120
- Bargaining ............................................................ 121
- Essential Items ..................................................... 122
- Stationery & Publications ....................................... 129
- Toiletries ............................................................... 127
- Clothing ............................................................... 124
- Smoking .............................................................. 131
- Materials .............................................................. 125
- Sizes & Comparisons ............................................. 132
- Colours ............................................................... 126
- Weights & Measures .............................................. 133

## FOOD

- Breakfast ............................................................... 135
- Vegetarian & Special Meals .................................... 136
- Eating Out ............................................................ 138
- Typical Dishes ....................................................... 141
- Menu Decoder ....................................................... 141
- Self-Catering ........................................................ 146
- At the Market ......................................................... 146
- Drinks ................................................................. 152
IN THE COUNTRY ..............................................155
Camping ........................................... 155
Hiking ............................................. 157
At the Beach .................................. 160
Weather .......................................... 161

HEALTH..............................................................167
At the Doctor .................................. 167
Ailments ......................................... 170
Women’s Health .......................... 172
Special Health Needs ................. 174

SPECIFIC NEEDS.................................................179
Disabled Travellers ................. 179
Gay Travellers .............................. 180
Travelling with the Family .. 181
On Business .................................. 182

TIME, DATES & FESTIVALS ..................................187
Telling the Time .................... 187
Days ........................................ 188
Months ..................................... 189
Dates ........................................... 189
Present ..................................... 190
Past ........................................... 190
Future ........................................ 191
During the Day ...................... 192
Seasons ..................................... 192
Holidays & Festivals ............. 193
Weddings ............................... 197
Funerals .................................... 198

NUMBERS & AMOUNTS .....................................199
Cardinal Numbers .................... 199
Ordinal Numbers ..................... 200
Fractions .................................. 200
Quantity ................................... 201

EMERGENCIES ...................................................203
Dealing with the Police .......... 204
Health ....................................... 207

ENGLISH–MALAY DICTIONARY ..........................209

MALAY–ENGLISH DICTIONARY ..........................257

INDEX .................................................................301

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL ........................................307
The national language of Malaysia is Malay. Malaysians refer to it as Bahasa Malaysia (Language of Malaysia) or Bahasa Melayu (Language of the Malays). It’s been the language in government and schools since the early ’70s, so nearly every Malaysian speaks it, either as their first or second language.

Don’t be confused by the terminology. ’Malays’ are those who are racially considered Malay, usually Muslim, who also speak the language Malay. Malaysians are, of course, anyone who is a Malaysian citizen.

Malay is a member of the Western Austronesian language family and is spoken with slight variations throughout Malaysia and some parts of southern Thailand, Singapore and Brunei. In Malaysia, it’s by no means the only language. Multiracial Malaysia is of course multilingual. Chinese Malaysians, who form approximately one third of the population, belong to many different dialect groups, including Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkiens, Teochew and Hainanese, and many also speak Mandarin. Indian Malaysians have linguistic backgrounds in Tamil and Malayalee; other groups speak Punjabi, Gujarati and Bengali. They account for about 10% of the population.

Wherever you go in Malaysia you will see shop signs in a rainbow of languages and scripts. Malay uses the Roman alphabet, but was originally written in jawi, an adaptation of Arabic script created during the introduction of Islam in the 14th century. You might notice the halal sign in jawi script, which shows food is kosher for Muslims. At the crossroads of many trade routes, Malaysia’s language has a potpourri of influences. In addition to Arabic (mahkamah, ‘court’), there’s Portuguese (garfu, ‘fork’), Sanskrit (istana, ‘palace’), Chinese (mee, ‘noodles’), and English, (elektrik, ‘electric’).

Classical Malay was almost lost during British colonisation. It was the traders and merchants who kept the language alive during these times. ‘Bazaar Malay’ became a lingua franca and was the basis for the Bahasa Melayu we know today.
Introduction

Bahasa Melayu also forms the basis for Bahasa Indonesia, but while Indonesian has been influenced by Dutch, Malaysian has adopted more English words, making it a dream of a language to learn for English speakers. English is Malaysia’s second tongue, and is a compulsory subject in schools from the age of seven. Words such as ‘clinic’ and ‘antibiotic’ are incorporated into Malay through a change of spelling (klinik and antibiotik) and educated Malays often tend to mix languages in their daily conversations. English is commonly spoken in urban areas and it’s not difficult to find someone who speaks some, even in rural areas.

While standard Malay is spoken in Kuala Lumpur, other regions of Malaysia have their own dialects that vary in pronunciation and accent. Regional accents can be strong, with variations in vocabulary. In Kelantan, Apa khabar?, ‘How are you?’ becomes Guano demo?. But never fear, your attempts at standard Malay will definitely be understood!

BAHASA MALAYSIA OR BAHASA MELAYU?

In this country where racial tensions still bubble under the surface of every decision, the difference between these two terms is loaded with meaning.

After the race riots of 1969 the government made many moves to address economic inequities, including a declaration that Malay should become the national language and the medium of instruction in all schools. But what to call the language?

Bahasa Malaysia, ‘the language of Malaysia’, was considered a unifying name, implicitly for Malaysians of all origins. In 1989 however, the members of the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (The Hall of Language and Publishing), who are predominantly Malay, decided to change it back to Bahasa Melayu, ‘the language of the Malays’. This move was seen by some to be a racially possessive, ‘our language, not yours’ move. It remains the official name.
Bahasa Melayu is an easy language to learn to speak. The spelling is largely phonetic; tenses are simple to use and you don’t have to worry about gender in grammar. This makes for fast progress and plenty of communication. You’ll get a kick out of learning Malay, and remember that, even a simple *terima kasih* (*teh-ree-muh kah-sih*), ‘thank you’, will please the people you meet. *Selamat belajar*, *seh-lah-mah beh-lah-jar*, ‘happy learning’ and now *jumlah!* (*joom-ahl(h)*) – ‘let’s get to it!’

**MALAY & INDONESIAN**

Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia have only a few differences in vocabulary and pronunciation. The structure and other aspects of grammar remain the same in both languages. This means that this book could stay in your bag for travels further south, and the same goes for our Indonesian phrasebook – a great read – in Malaysia. The differences in vocabulary include some of the most common words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Malay</th>
<th>Indonesian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>after</td>
<td>selepas</td>
<td>sesudah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>afternoon</td>
<td>petang</td>
<td>sore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beef</td>
<td>daging lembu</td>
<td>daging sapi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brother</td>
<td>abang/adik</td>
<td>kakak/laki-laki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can (as in ‘I can’)</td>
<td>bisa</td>
<td>boleh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>car</td>
<td>boleh</td>
<td>kereta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>city</td>
<td>bandar</td>
<td>kota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cold (adj)</td>
<td>sejuk</td>
<td>dingin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cute (eg, baby)</td>
<td>manis/cun</td>
<td>lucu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invite</td>
<td>menjemput</td>
<td>mengundang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr/Mrs</td>
<td>Tuan/Encik</td>
<td>Bapak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>office</td>
<td>pejabat</td>
<td>kantor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>room</td>
<td>bilik</td>
<td>kamar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shoes</td>
<td>kasut</td>
<td>sepatu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shop</td>
<td>kedai</td>
<td>toko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toilet</td>
<td>tandas/toilet</td>
<td>WC, kamar kecil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>