



Langkawi, Kedah & Perlis

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Best Places to Eat

- » Muda Coffee Shop (p203)
- » Hungry Monkey (p197)
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- » Ashkim (p198)
- » Langkawi's night market (p197)

Best Places to Stay

- » Bon Ton & Temple Tree (p193)
- » Ambong Ambong (p194)
- » Tanjung Sanctuary (p195)
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- » Datai Langkawi (p196)

Why Go?

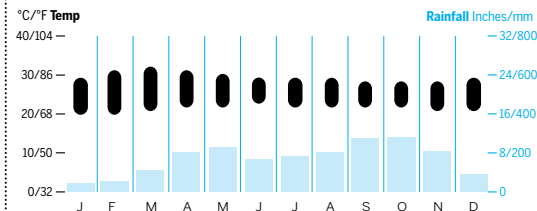
The Malays are known as *bumiputra* (sons of the soil). That soil, physical and cultural, is most fertile in Kedah and Perlis. Limestone pillars thrust up through this paddyscape, which makes for the harvest of over half of Malaysia's rice supply.

Not that many foreigners see this. While it may be one of the most touristed states in Malaysia, most travellers would draw a blank if you asked them anything about 'Kedah'. That's because almost everyone knows it by its biggest island and Malaysia's number-one holiday destination: Pulau Langkawi. And justifiably so; Langkawi's clear waters and wide beaches warrant the attention they receive, while corners of the island even seem to mimic the green, fecund terrain of the mainland.

Perlis, Malaysia's smallest state, has an even lower profile. It's also proximate to Thailand, and most travellers rush through here on their way to that kingdom. Their loss: this corner of the country is part of the Malay heartland, which makes it overwhelmingly friendly and culturally significant.

When to Go

Kuala Kedah



Feb Generally the region's driest month, although temperatures can be relatively high.

Apr–Oct The wettest time of year; the odd tropical storm is expected and tourist numbers are low.

Jul Typically Pulau Langkawi's coolest month.

KEDAH

For travellers' purposes there are essentially two Kedahs: the tropical island of Pulau Langkawi and its attached islets; and rural, little-visited mainland Kedah. The paddy field is the eternal horizon of the latter, also known as Malaysia's 'rice bowl'. Two blocks of colour constantly kiss at the edge of your eyesight: robin's-egg blue on top and deep,

alive green on the bottom, with strips of bitumen webbing through. If you find inspiration in the rustic, clean-lined aesthetic of Asian agriculture, this state is the field of sunflowers to your inner van Gogh.

The other Kedah is the stuff of tourist brochures that don't skimp on descriptions such as 'sun-kissed' or 'paradise'. The good news is that Langkawi's beaches generally live up to the hype, and you'll even



Langkawi, Kedah & Perlis Highlights

1 Sliding through the seven pools of Langkawi's **Telaga Tujuh** (p193)
2 Riding the **Panorama Langkawi** (p187) cable car all 708m to the top of Gunung Machinchang to enjoy the spectacular views

3 Revelling in the former glory days of royal Malaysia in **Alor Setar** (p200)
4 Relaxing on one of the stunning beaches of **Pulau Langkawi** (p185)
5 Exploring the limestone cliffs and remote border feel

of **Taman Negara Perlis** (p205)
6 Visiting one of the country's better provincial museums at the **Muzium Kota Kayang** (p204)
7 Getting into the groove of small-town Malaysia in tiny **Kangar** (p204)