



Melaka

06 / POP 860,000 / AREA 1652 SQ KM

Includes →

Melaka City	217
Ayer Keroh	233
Pulau Besar	233
Alor Gajah	234

Best Places to Eat

- Nancy's Kitchen (p228)
- Pak Putra Restaurant (p228)
- Kocik Kitchen (p228)
- Selvam (p229)
- Le QUE (p228)

Best Places to Stay

- 45 Lekiu & The Stable (p226)
- Hotel Puri (p226)
- Majestic Malacca (p227)
- Apa Kaba Home & Stay (p227)
- Gingerflower (p226)

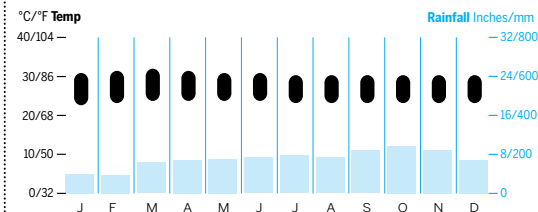
Why Go?

Centuries of vigorous conquests and maritime trade are now distant memories. But the last decade has seen Melaka capitalise on its swashbuckling history, asserting itself as one of Malaysia's most irresistible tourist draws.

Back when Kuala Lumpur was a muddy swamp and Penang was yet to become the 'Pearl of the Orient', Melaka was already one of Southeast Asia's greatest trading ports. Over time it lost favour to Singapore, but this slowdown in trade protected the ancient architecture of Melaka City, the state capital, from development. Much of it remains beautifully preserved to this day. When its historic centre was crowned a Unesco World Heritage Site in 2008, it kickstarted a decade of renewal. Modern Melaka swaggers once more, with visitors pouring in to experience the bustling weekend night market, heritage museums and famously glitzy trishaws. The rest of the state is a patchwork of forests, farmland and beaches, with a generous scattering of family-friendly attractions in smaller towns Alor Gajah and Ayer Keroh.

When to Go

Melaka



Jan & Feb Chinese New Year brings chaos and colour to the hot and dry months.

Apr–Jul Milder temperatures and festivals galore.

Nov & Dec Book ahead to see Christmas and Deepavali celebrations.



Melaka Highlights

- 1 Feasting on Peranakan curries, Portuguese seafood, Indian banana leaf spreads and fabulous coffee across Melaka's **remarkable restaurants** (p228).
- 2 Being inspired by **Chinatown's** (p221) galleries and craft workshops, and watching artists at work.
- 3 Experiencing the razzle-dazzle and street food of **Jonker Walk Night Market** (p231).
- 4 Taking your pick of the **flashy trishaws** (p232) for a spin around Melaka's historic centre.
- 5 Embracing nostalgia at the atmospheric **Baba & Nyonya Heritage Museum** (p221).
- 6 Delighting in vibrant colours and neck-craning temples on a stroll through **Kampung Chitty** (p223).
- 7 Watching the sun set over **Masjid Selat Melaka** (p224), the city's stately 'floating mosque'.
- 8 Ambling among traditional houses at open-air **Taman Mini Malaysia** (p233) in Ayer Keroh.

History

The modern city-state of Melaka bloomed from a simple 14th-century fishing village founded by Parameswara, a Hindu prince from Sumatra. According to legend, Parameswara was inspired to build Melaka after seeing a plucky mouse deer fending off a dog attack.

Melaka's location halfway between China and India, with easy access to the spice islands of Indonesia, soon attracted merchants from all over the East and became a favoured port. In 1405, the Chinese Muslim Admiral Cheng Ho arrived in Melaka bearing gifts from the Ming emperor and the promise of protection from Siamese enemies. Chinese settlers followed, who mixed with the local Malays to become known as the Baba and Nonya, Peranakans or Straits Chinese. By the time of Parameswara's death

in 1414, Melaka was a powerful trading state. Its position was consolidated by the state's adoption of Islam in the mid-15th century.

In 1509, the Portuguese came seeking spice wealth and in 1511 Alfonso de Albuquerque forcibly took the city. Under the Portuguese, the fortress of A'Famosa was constructed. While Portuguese cannons could easily conquer Melaka, they could not force Muslim merchants from Arabia and India to continue trading there, and other ports in the area, such as Islamic Demak on Java, grew to overshadow Melaka.

Suffering attacks from neighbouring Johor and Negeri Sembilan, as well as from the Islamic power of Aceh in Sumatra, Melaka declined further. The city passed into Dutch hands after an eight-month siege in 1641 and the Dutch ruled Melaka for about 150 years. Melaka again became the centre