

CULTURES OF THE WORLD™

MALAYSIA

Heidi Munan/Foo Yuk Yee



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Malaysian schoolgirls waving their country's flag at the National Day parade.

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An Iban wearing a headdress. The Iban are one of the main tribes in East Malaysia.



Getting used to holiday gear. Malay children wear traditional clothing during Malay festivals.

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INTRODUCTION

LOCATED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, Malaysia lies just north of the equator. The country consists of two parts: East Malaysia (Sabah and Sarawak) and West, or Peninsular, Malaysia. Thailand lies to the north of Peninsular Malaysia, while the island state of Singapore lies at its southern tip. The South China Sea separates Peninsular Malaysia from East Malaysia, which is located on the Indonesian island of Borneo.

Malaysia is endowed with natural resources. It has large reserves of petroleum and natural gas and is a leading exporter of tin, rubber, palm oil, and tropical hardwoods. With luxuriant rainforests, the country is also rich in plant and animal life.

Malaysia's wealth of natural treasures is matched by its ethnic diversity. The government encourages intermingling among the three major ethnic groups—Malay, Chinese, and Indian. Racial and religious harmony in the country has created an eclectic mixture of cultures. As a result, Malaysians enjoy a wide range of festivals and cuisines.

