

# 10 Interesting Facts About Malaysia

Rotating kings and a huge trove of lost treasure are among the interesting facts about the birthplace of Jimmy Choo.

By [U.S. News Staff](#) | July 19, 2019



A person stands inside Deer Cave in Malaysia's Gunung Mulu National Park. The park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, also is home to the Sarawak chamber, the world's largest known cave chamber. (ROBBIE STONE/BARCROFT MEDIA/GETTY IMAGES)

**Malaysia** is a small country with a fast-growing economy. Located on a trade route in the South China Sea, the Southeast Asian country has an open, diversified, upper-middle income economy.

Here are 10 interesting facts about Malaysia:

1. The country declared independence from the **British Empire** in 1957.
2. Ethnic Malays account for **roughly half** of Malaysia's estimated 31 million people. Other significant groups include Chinese, Indians and various indigenous peoples.
3. Malaysia has a unique rotating monarchy system, in which **nine ethnic Malay state rulers take turns** as king for five-year terms.

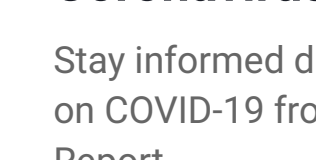
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4. The country is made up of **two main landmasses**, Peninsular Malaysia and Malaysian Borneo. They are separated by the South China Sea.
5. The Sarawak Cave Chamber is the largest known cave chamber in the world. It is located in Gunung Mulu National Park, on the island of Borneo.
6. The Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur were the world's tallest buildings until 2004. Standing **451.9 meters (1,483 feet) high** with 88 stories, the structures remain as the world's tallest twin buildings.
7. Shoe designer Jimmy Choo was born in Penang, Malaysia. Queen Elizabeth II awarded him the Order of the British Empire in 2003.
8. What may be the world's richest unrecovered treasure trove from a sunken ship rests somewhere on the sea floor in Malaysia's Strait of Malacca. The Portuguese ship **Flora de la mar (Flower of the sea)** was returning home loaded with what was then the largest treasure collected by the Portuguese navy when it sank in December 1511. Today, **modern-day pirates** are known to patrol the Malaysian strait.
9. The national currency is the ringgit, which is a dated term for "jagged" in the Malay language and refers to the serrated edges of silver Spanish dollars widely used in the 16th and 17th centuries.

10. **Four UNESCO-designated World Heritage Sites** are found in Malaysia: Gunung Mulu National Park, Kinabalu Park, the historic cities of Melaka and George Town, and the archaeological heritage site of the Lenggong Valley.

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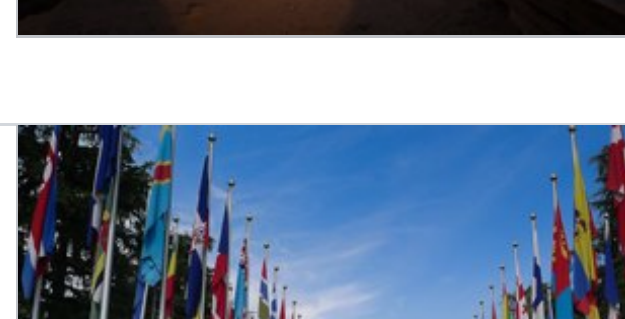
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