

Culture of malaysia essay sample



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Ethnic groups: Malay 50. 4%, Chinese 23. 7%, indigenous 11%, Indian 7. 1%, others 7. 8% (2004 est.) Religions: Muslim (or Islam – official) 60. 4%, Buddhist 19. 2%, Christian 9. 1%, Hindu 6. 3%, Confucianism, Taoism, other traditional Chinese religions 2. 6%, other or unknown 1. 5%, none 0. 8% (2000 census) Physical or spatial distance:

Just the same as in other country, in Malaysia there is an intimate zone reserved for lovers, children and close family members, another zone used for conversations with friends, to chat with associates, and in group discussions; a further zone reserving for strangers, newly formed groups, and new acquaintances; and a fourth zone is used for speeches, lectures, and theater; essentially, public distance is that range reserved for larger audiences. Greeting protocol:

Greetings in a social context will depend upon the ethnicity of the person you are meeting. In general, most Malays are aware of Western ways so the handshake is normal. •Malay women may not shake hands with men.

Women can of course shake hands with women. Men may also not shake hands with women and may bow instead while placing their hand on their heart. •The Chinese handshake is light and may be rather prolonged. Men and women may shake hands, although the woman must extend her hand first. •Indians shake hands with members of the same sex. When being introduced to someone of the opposite sex, nodding the head and smiling is usually sufficient. Gift giving:

Gift giving to Malays: •If invited to someone’s home, bring the hostess pastries or good quality chocolates. •Never give alcohol. •Do not give toy

dogs or pigs to children. •Do not give anything made of pigskin. •Avoid white wrapping paper as it symbolizes death and mourning and avoid yellow wrapping paper, as it is the color of royalty. •If you give food, it must be “halal” (meaning permissible for Muslims). •Offer gifts with the right hand only or both hands. •Gifts are generally not opened when received. Gift giving to Chinese: •If invited to someone’s home, bring a small gift of fruit, sweets, or cakes.

- A gift is traditionally refused before it is accepted to demonstrate modesty.
- Do not give scissors, knives or other cutting utensils as they indicate a desire to sever the relationship. •Do not wrap gifts in mourning colours – white, blue, or black. • It is best to give gifts in even numbers since odd numbers are unlucky. • Gifts are generally not opened when received.

Gift giving to Indians: •If you give flowers, avoid frangipani as they are used in funeral wreaths. • Money should be given in odd numbers. • Offer gifts with the right hand only or both hands if the item is large. • Do not wrap gifts in white or black. • Wrap gifts in red, yellow or green paper or other bright colors as these bring good fortune. • Do not give leather products to a Hindu. • Do not give alcohol unless you are certain the recipient drinks. • Gifts are generally not opened when received. Attitude toward timeliness:

- In Malaysia, you can expect people to be late, especially for social event.
- The majority of Malaysian business people are Chinese, and you can expect them to be punctual. Most government officials are ethnic Malays who have more of a relaxed attitude toward time and Business travelers are expected to be on time. The Indian’s perspective on time is similar to that of the

Malays. However, the Indian professionals you may encounter will expect punctuality. Attitude toward relationship building:

Malaysians place great emphasis on relationship building before getting down to business. Expect most of the first meeting to be taken up with general conversation. Sharing a meal helps you get to know your Malaysian contact, so does playing golf and going sightseeing. During the initial meeting it is a good idea to stick to small talk and general topics until your counterparts signal they are ready to talk business. Avoid criticizing local customs, politics or religion. Another interesting things about the culture :

The Concept of Face: Malays, Chinese and Indians all strive to maintain face and avoid shame both in public and private. Face is a personal concept that embraces qualities such as a good name, good character, and being held in esteem by one's peers. Face is considered a commodity that can be given, lost, taken away, or earned. On top of this face also extends to the family, school, company, and even the nation itself. The desire to maintain face makes Malaysians strive for harmonious relationships.