

KL the least expensive city

Rated on food, goods, clothes, hotel

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PETALING JAYA: Kuala Lumpur is the least expensive city in the world for Western tourists.

A survey of 71 cities worldwide by Swiss banking giant UBS found that Malaysia's capital has the most competitive prices when it comes to food, electronic goods, clothes, public transport, hotel rates and entertainment.

A five-star hotel room in Kuala Lumpur costs an average US\$150 (RM551) compared to US\$450 (RM1,647) for a similar room in New York. The most expensive is Tokyo, where

the rate is US\$510 (RM1,866).

For a room in a two- or three-star hotel, the rate in Kuala Lumpur is about US\$50 (RM183), compared with US\$250 (RM915) in New York.

Comparable hotel room prices are found in Buenos Aires (Argentina), Bogota (Colombia) or Nairobi (Kenya) but if a tourist wants to have a short stay including a city tour, Kuala Lumpur is still the cheapest.

The UBS survey put together a basket of goods consisting of an overnight stay for two in a first-class hotel, two dinners with a bottle of house red wine, one taxi ride, a 100km trip in a rented car, two outings to the

theatre by public transport and miscellaneous expenses.

It found that one only has to pay US\$260 (RM951) for the package in Kuala Lumpur compared with US\$920 (RM3,367) in New York.

After Kuala Lumpur, the survey found the next cheapest city to be Manila, where a similar package costs US\$330 (RM1,207).

The most expensive city in this category is London where the cost is US\$1,180 (RM4,318).

Taxi fares in Kuala Lumpur are also one of the cheapest in the world at US\$1.60 (RM5.88) for a 5km trip within the city. A similar trip in New York costs

TOURIST EXPENSES IN SELECTED CITIES (RM)

	Taxi fare ¹	Price of city break ²	Restaurant ³	Hotel ⁴	Monthly rent for expensive 3-room unfurnished apartment ⁵
Kuala Lumpur	5.85	951	44	549	1,756
Bangkok	6.22	1,793	99	878	2,269
London	74	4,318	234	1,830	22,618
New York	42	3,367	183	1,647	21,484
Hong Kong	59	3,037	95	1,244	21,008
Singapore	22.7	2,305	106	1,098	7,246
Tokyo	48	3,989	281	1,866	15,628
Jakarta	8	1,756	44	988	4,099
Manila	5.5	1,207	66	695	3,001
Sydney	45	2,415	175	1,134	11,602

¹ Price of a 5km fare within the city limits.

² City break consists of a basket of 10 goods – overnight stay for two in a first-class hotel, two dinners with a bottle of the house red wine, one taxi ride, 100km in a rented car, two outings to the theatre by public transport and various small expenditures.

³ Price of a three-course evening meal with starter, main course and dessert without drinks in a good restaurant.

⁴ Price for a double room en-suite, including breakfast for two in a first-class hotel in the international category or in a good mid-range hotel.

⁵ Rents are based on apartments built after 1980 (3 rooms, kitchen, bathroom, without garage; including incidental expenses) with average comfort for the locality and near the city centre.

US\$11.60 (RM42).

Food prices in Kuala Lumpur are considerably lower than in other cities, with a three-course meal in a good restaurant costing US\$12 (RM44) for one person.

As for car prices, a Ford Focus in New York or a Peugeot 206 in Buenos Aires costs less than a Proton in KL. However, fuel

prices in Kuala Lumpur are the cheapest among all the cities surveyed.

Apartment rent in Kuala Lumpur is also the cheapest. An unfurnished 3-room apartment in Kuala Lumpur goes for about US\$480 (RM1,756) compared with US\$5,870 (RM21,484) in New York.

As for wages, KL is still far

behind, with an average hourly gross wage (calculated across 14 professions) of US\$3.60 (RM13), lower than the Asian average of US\$5 (RM18). The average hourly wage in Europe and the United States is US\$16-US\$17 (RM57-RM61).

Kuala Lumpur folks clock about 16 more days a year than their Western counterparts.



BEAUTIFUL DAY: A picture postcard shot taken as clear skies reigned over Putrajaya at 1pm yesterday.