

Brunei Malay of Brunei

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Who are the Brunei Malay?

Malay people make up 67% of the population of Brunei, a tiny nation of only 5,270 sq km sandwiched between the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak on the northwest coast of Borneo. A major exporter of oil and natural gas, Brunei is one of Asia's wealthiest nations. The average income per person is in excess of US\$25,000. For Brunei citizens, education and health care are free. There is no income tax, and housing subsidies are readily available. There is no poverty.

Most of Brunei's 250,000 Malay people live either in the capital city, Bandar Seri Begawan, or along the coast.

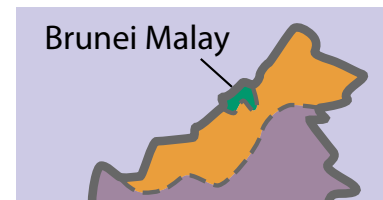
Livelihood

Malay people are given many special privileges in Brunei including access to national universities and preference when applying for government jobs. Large numbers of Malays are employed in the government, as well as in the oil industry. Others work as fishermen and boatmen.

Culture

The Brunei Malay are proud that their country is a "Malay Muslim Monarchy." Islam, Malay language and culture, and the Sultan affect all aspects of life in this tiny nation.

The Sultan of Brunei is an absolute monarch, serving as Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, Head of Police and Head of Islam in Brunei. The Sultan, along with Brunei's powerful religious authorities, is responsible for upholding and promoting Islam and the Islamic way of life. The Sultan has already performed the pilgrimage to Mecca several times. He personally financed the building of housing in Mecca for other Brunei pilgrims. He is widely respected by the people.



Population: 250,000
Location: Brunei
Languages: Malay, English



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Pray that God would comfort Malay followers of Jesus who face persecution.

Pray that the Brunei Malay would hunger after God.

Pray that the leaders of Brunei, including the Sultan and his family, would come to know Jesus.

Pray that non-Malay followers of Jesus in Brunei would have an increasing desire to reach out to their Malay neighbors and colleagues. Pray that they would reach out especially to Brunei's troubled youth.

Pray for the thousands of Filipino followers of Jesus in Brunei, many in strategic places of work and influence, to impact the Malay.

Pray for followers of Jesus who work in schools or in the oil industry to be salt and light within their circles of influence and neighborhoods.

Because Brunei is a strict Islamic nation, public entertainment options are limited. Few people go to the beach, cinemas are not well frequented and western-style entertainment establishments are conspicuous by their absence, one reason perhaps why tourism has been difficult to promote here. The people of Brunei do, however, enjoy visiting Jerudong Park, the “Disneyland of Brunei,” which has become a popular “playground” for the people of Brunei since it was built several years ago.

As in many other countries, Brunei's youth are highly influenced by television, the internet and travel overseas, and many are turning from the lifestyle of their parents and adopting “Western” cultural patterns, much to their parents' dismay. Some young people struggle with drug addiction.

Beliefs

Brunei is an Islamic state, and Islam is obligatory for all Brunei Malay. It is estimated that Brunei has more mosques per square kilometer than any other country in the world. The people of Brunei are especially proud of the Jame Hassanal Bolkhiah Mosque, an imposing marble structure with 25 gold domes and a massive prayer hall, built in commemoration of the Sultan's jubilee in 1992.

The Religious Affairs Department actively and strictly regulates the practice of Islam in Brunei, vigorously promoting Islam and monitoring the activities of other religions. The Education Department insists that Islam be taught to all pupils at every level. Many non-Malay followers of Jesus meet secretly, as gatherings in homes are sometimes raided by the police and closed down. Only a handful of Brunei Malay follow Jesus, and these face severe persecution. Sharing the Good News with Muslims is illegal.