

## Dos and Don'ts

When visiting Malaysia, visitors should observe local customs and practices. Some common courtesies and customs are as follows:

- Although handshakes are generally acceptable for both men and women, some Muslim ladies may acknowledge introductions to gentlemen by merely nodding and smiling. A handshake should only be initiated by ladies. The traditional greeting or salam resembles a handshake with both hands but without the grasp. The man offers both hands, lightly touches his friends outstretched hands, and then brings his hands to his chest to mean, "I greet you from my heart". The visitor should reciprocate the salam.
- It is polite to call before visiting a home.
- Shoes must always be removed when entering a Malaysian home.
- Drinks are generally offered to guests. It is polite to accept.
- The right hand is always used when eating with one's hand or giving and receiving objects.
- The right forefinger is not used to point at places, objects or persons. Instead, the thumb of the right hand with four fingers folded under is the preferred usage.
- Shoes must be removed when entering places of worship such as mosques and temples. Some mosques provide robes and scarves for female visitors. Taking photographs at places of worship is usually permitted but always ask permission beforehand.
- Toasting is not a common practice in Malaysia. The country's large Muslim population does not drink alcohol.