

MENLO ABROAD



MALAYSIA



May 19-June 8, 2025



Menlo Abroad: Malaysia

May 19-June 8, 2025



IN BRIEF

Menlo Abroad offers transformative experiences through guided immersive travel in the global South. Emphasizing relationship-building through homestay and community engagement, students develop knowledge, skills, and a greater understanding of themselves and their world. They emerge with a renewed sense of purpose and a desire to serve.¹



Menlo Abroad: Malaysia is developed and offered in coordination with Ecotourism and Conservation Society,

Dates: May 19-June 8, 2025

(Note that participants will be out of the country and unable to return for Commencement or related activities. June 8 is a required day of reflection and celebration on the Menlo campus.)

Enrollment Limits: 16 students

Enrollment Eligibility: Menlo students in grades 9-11. For medical questions or exemption requests contact the Menlo’s school nurse.

Trip Leaders: There will be two Menlo-affiliated trip leaders: Upper School Science teacher Tanya Buxton and Upper School Dean and History teacher Sabahat Adil. There will also be one or two leaders from the Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Malaysia.

All-Inclusive Fee²: \$6200. Financial aid may be available. Current financial aid recipients should contact Rose Garza (rose.garza@menloschool.org) for information.

¹ Menlo Abroad is an elective option for MTerm and is considered and assessed as an M Term course. But while other MTerm courses will end May 30, Menlo Abroad courses complete on the evening of June 8, 2025. Menlo Abroad service participation earns students 15 community engagement credits.

² Fee includes all flights • hotel accommodation • all meals • all surface transportation • museum, park, and temple entrance fees • course preparation manual and reading materials • donations to charitable causes in the host country • instructor and extra guide fees • on-site equipment rental where needed • comprehensive risk management systems and administrative support 24/7. The fee does not include trip cancellation insurance or expenses for petty cash expenditures (est. at \$200), travel medicine or immunization or obtaining passports and visas.

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The southeast Asian country of Malaysia is a fascinating area of the world, a blend of tradition and modernity, religious and ethnic diversity, and biological wonder. While 60% of the landmass of the country is across the Java Sea on the island of Borneo, the majority of the population resides on the Malay Peninsula, where our trip will center. After an initial on-campus orientation and a long flight, we begin our journey in Kuala Lumpur, the nation's capital. Here, we meet our in-country associate, Andrew Sebastian from Ecotourism and Conservation Society Malaysia (ECOMY), and take time to rest and acclimate to our new surroundings. Kuala Lumpur has experienced rapid development over the last three decades, boasting iconic landmarks like the Petronas Towers—two of the world's tallest buildings—as well as cultural enclaves such as Chinatown and Little India. The city is also home to important historical and religious sites, including the National Museum and the National Mosque. With about two thirds of the population identifying as “Malay,” Islam is the state religion; however, Malaysia is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society that interacts in complex ways we will begin to explore in Kuala Lumpur along with the many diverse and enticing culinary options in the markets and ethnic enclaves. Leaving Kuala Lumpur we visit the Batu Caves en route to Tahan Negara, Malaysia's largest national park, a swath of continuous lowland dipterocarp rainforest. It features an astonishing array of tropical flora and a vast variety of wildlife, including elephants, tigers, leopards, tapirs, and flying squirrels. This park, adjacent to our homestay village of Kuala Tahan, is the site of some community engagement activities, and we will visit it often. In Kuala Tahan we begin homestays, the heart of the program. Here students will meet their eager homestay families, who they will get to know over the next ten days. Many of the families work in the park or on a nearby palm oil plantation. At the mid point of our stay in Kuala Tahan we will go on an overnight excursion to visit and work with the semi-nomadic Orang Asli indigenous population, known to anthropologists for their history of non-violence. Like many indigenous groups the Orang Asli have suffered from loss of habitat, including to palm oil plantation expansion. Towards the end of our trip we leave our hosts in Kuala Tahan and ECOMY and transfer to the northeastern Malaysian island state of Penang. A former British colony, Penang and its capital Georgetown (named for *that* King George) is a particularly vibrant, diverse, and fun place to visit and to engage in reflection and transference activities before returning home for our final day on the Menlo campus.



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ITINERARY

(Note: Itinerary is subject to change.)

Monday, May 19 Menlo Campus (morning) and SFO (night)

Morning: on Menlo campus for orientation
Afternoon: at home for final preparations for departure
Evening: departure for Kuala Lumpur,, Malaysia

Wednesday, May 21 Kuala Lumpur

Meet ECOMY: Andrew Sebastian and Samantha Wong
Transfer to hotel
Rest and lunch
Half day tour of Kuala Lumpur
Dinner and lodging at Kuala Lumpur hotel

Thursday, May 22 Kuala Lumpur

Breakfast
Checkin
Tour of Kuala Lumpur continued
Lunch and Dinner out
Lodging at Kuala Lumpur hotel

Friday, May 23 Kuala Lumpur, Batu Caves, Tahan Negara

Breakfast
Early departure for Batu Caves:
Batu Cave visit
Lunch
Transfer to Tahan Negara
Visit national park
Dinner and hotel lodging

Saturday, May 24 Kuala Tahan

Breakfast
Check in
Visit Tahan Negara - CE project
Lunch with cohort
Introduction to homestay
Dinner and lodging with homestay

Sunday, May 25 Kuala Tahan

Breakfast with homestay family
Check in
CE activity - Tahan Negara ³
Lunch with cohort
CE activity - Tehan Negara
Dinner, freetime, and lodging with homestay

Monday, May 26 Kuala Tahan

Breakfast with homestay family
Check in
CE activity - Tahan Negara
Lunch with cohort
CE activity - Tehan Negara
Dinner, freetime, and lodging with homestay



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ITINERARY (cont.)

(Note: Itinerary is subject to change.)

Tuesday, May 27 Kuala Tahan

Breakfast with homestay family
Check in
CE activity - Tahan Negara
Lunch with cohort
CE activity - Tahan Negara
Dinner, freetime, and lodging with homestay

Wednesday, May 28 Transfer to Orang Asli Communities

Breakfast
Check in
Depart for Orang Asli Communities
Lunch
Visit and CE activity with Orang Asli
Debrief Orang Asli and homestay experience to date
Dinner and hotel lodging

Thursday, May 29 Kuala Tahan

Breakfast with homestay
Check in
CE activity or alternative
Lunch
Afternoon CE activity or alternative
Dinner and lodging with homestay family

Friday, May 30 Kuala Tahan

Breakfast with homestay
Visit to mosque
All day with homestay
Dinner and lodging with homestay

Saturday, May 31 Kuala Tahan

Breakfast with homestay
Check in
CE activity or alternative
Lunch
Afternoon CE activity or alternative
Dinner and lodging with homestay family

Sunday, June 1 Kuala Tahan

Breakfast with homestay
Check in
CE activity or alternative
Lunch
Afternoon CE activity or alternative
Dinner and lodging with homestay family

³ CE activities are to be determined but will likely relate to biodiversity survey and data collection as well as tree planting in Tahan Negara, assisting the Orang Asli with social media and education visits, interviews of people of interest. CE activities will occasionally alternate with non-CE activities such as visits to palm oil plantations, hikes to waterfalls and swimming.

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ITINERARY (cont.)

(Note: Itinerary is subject to change.)

Monday, June 2 **Kuala Tahan**

Breakfast with homestay
Checkin
CE activity or alternative
Lunch
Afternoon CE activity or alternative
Dinner and lodging with homestay family

Tuesday, June 3 **Kuala Tahan**

Breakfast with homestay
Checkin
CE activity or alternative
Lunch
Celebration and thank yous
Last night with homestay family

Wednesday, June 4 **Kuala Tahan - Penang**

Breakfast
Goodbyes to Homestay
Transfer to Georgetown, Penang
Dinner and lodging at Hotel

Thursday, June 5 **Penang**

Breakfast
Checkin
Hike Penang Hill
Visit Kek Lok Si Temple (Buddhist)
Lunch
Curtis Crest Tree Top Walk and activities
Dinner out and lodging at Hotel

Friday, June 6 **Penang**

Breakfast
Checkin
Blue Mansion visit
Lunch
Reflection and Transference

Saturday, June 7 **PEN to SFO (travel)**

Sunday, June 8 **Menlo Campus**

Post-trip activities, project and reflection
Celebratory dinner with parents and guardians.³

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³ Students must attend the final day to receive full credit for the course.



TIMELINE OF APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT PROCESS

January 10	Announcement of Menlo Abroad and Borderlands programs at upper school assembly
January 28	Applications due
February 5	Participants notified
February 11	Forms and Payment due by 3:00 pm
April 14, 6:00 pm	Pre-departure information night (Spieker Center) for enrolled students and their parents (meeting is mandatory for student and at least one parent)
May 19, 9:00 am	Menlo Abroad: Malaysia orientation on Menlo campus; evening departure for Malaysia
May 19-June 7	Menlo Abroad: Malaysia trip
June 8	Re-entry day on Menlo Campus and completion of final projects, reflections, celebration. ⁴

⁴ Students must attend the final day to receive full credit for the course. The time and nature of the celebration is to be determined.



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PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Menlo Abroad: Malaysia is built around interrelated academic and experiential program components intended to create a holistic, immersive experience. Below is a list of these components as they relate to this program.

- 1. Survey of Development Issues:** Our program explores a range of development issues, from resource management and environmental impact to education to market- and community-oriented development. Students learn through their direct experiences, meetings with community members and leaders, and related activities.
- 2. Independent or Small-Group Study:** Menlo students will have the opportunity to investigate—individually or in small groups—a topic of particular interest, availing themselves of local knowledge and resources.
- 3. Language Study:** English is an official language of Malaysia as are Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil. English is frequently studied as a second language in schools and widely understood in urban areas. Students will receive some basic Malay instruction such as greetings and basic vocabulary in conjunction with their homestay experience.
- 4. Immersive Travel:** Traveling to traditional communities in developing countries requires students to get out of their comfort zones. In Menlo Abroad, students are travelers rather than tourists. They travel in a style that enables them to genuinely know the people of the countries they visit. For adaptable participants, it offers the most authentic experience and profound learning adventure. Students should expect to cope with cold water showers, basic infrastructure, and pit toilets in the rural areas.
- 5. Homestay:** Often the most challenging and fulfilling component, homestays take students to the core of their experience. Homestays are carefully set up with each student's individual personality in mind in order to provide the best experience in cultural and language immersion possible. In Kuala Tahan, homestays are coordinated through community leaders. Each student will be placed in a homestay, most likely together with another Menlo student. The cohort will gather most mornings to check in and to engage in group activities.
- 6. Community Engagement:** Students will learn about themselves and each other through their experiences working on community engagement projects of mutual interest and benefit.
- 7. Guided Reflection:** Students will regularly meet with Menlo and ECOMY leaders to investigate, monitor, problem solve, and reflect on events or issues particular to the individual students. Students will journal and blog frequently to communicate their experience with friends and family back home.

MENLO ABROAD ASPIRATIONS

1. **Knowledge and Global Competency**⁵: Menlo Abroad programs advance students' self-knowledge and global competencies, including intercultural capabilities, historical perspectives, and attentiveness to diversity. Through direct experience, students develop awareness of global systems and issues impacting their host communities.

2. **Dispositions of Global Engagement**⁶: Menlo Abroad programs cultivate internationally minded students who recognize their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet and strive to create a better and more peaceful world. Among the many positive dispositions they develop are agency, leadership, confidence, empathy, compassion, humility, feelings of interconnection, and respect.

3. **Relationships**: Menlo Abroad programs build sustaining relationships between students and diverse, underserved foreign communities and individuals through shared common experiences of everyday life.

4. **Community Engagement**: Menlo Abroad programs contribute to solutions based on mutually beneficial work, apprenticeship, or study, in activities that at the same time support students' knowledge of, and appreciation for, local cultures and issues at hand.

5. **Transference**: Menlo Abroad programs generate sustaining interest and connections with Menlo curricula and programs.

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⁵ *Global competency* includes the ability to investigate the world beyond the immediate environment, the recognition of one's own and other perspectives, and the ability to communicate ideas effectively with diverse audiences.

⁶ By *Global engagement*, we mean the dispositions necessary to be connected and of service to others, including those beyond national borders.





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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The program is being offered by Menlo School in conjunction with World Leadership School. In cases of programs offered in conjunction with other organizations, participants are required to complete forms, registration, waivers, and medical forms provided by both Menlo School and the third-party organization.

By February 11: To secure a place in the program each of the following must be submitted.

1. A check payment payable to Menlo School for **\$6200**. Financial aid recipients will be contacted by the financial aid with a revised program fee.
2. Completed and signed *Parent Permission and Waiver, Medical Release, Emergency and Medical Information Form - Overnight*
3. Completed and signed *Waiver and Release for Program within the United States*
4. Completed and signed Menlo School *Trip Contract*
5. Third party organization forms, waiver and release.

By April 14: Any remaining and required forms.

Equipment lists, air travel instructions, and further information about the program will be provided subsequently.

Our intention is to address the goals and curricular elements listed in the program description, but all participants are advised that course itineraries will likely change to incorporate participant goals and interests, to adjust to the health of members of the group, or in response to weather conditions, problems with transportation, political or social unrest or other unforeseen problems. Regardless of such changes, we will always work to structure and implement the course so that it stays true to the original intent.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Menlo encourages participants to consider the purchase of a travel insurance or trip cancellation insurance policy for the Borderlands trip. Check your primary medical insurance provider to assure your child will have medical coverage while traveling. If that is in question, travel insurance including medical coverage should be purchased.

If the participant is on financial aid, travel insurance purchases for this trip will be reimbursed at the rate of financial aid.

You might consider purchasing a travel insurance package through an organization such as InsureMyTrip to provide some financial protection against unforeseen circumstances or withdrawal. Menlo makes no recommendation regarding these options: Please read all policies carefully to ensure that your needs are met.

CANCELED TRIPS: A full refund will be made for canceled trips that arise out of insufficient registration, though Menlo is not responsible for other costs incurred by the student or family preparing for the trip. For trips canceled due to any other circumstance that is beyond Menlo's control, Menlo will refund all recoupable tuition. If Menlo decides to cancel the trip at its own discretion, Menlo will fully refund participants' payments.

REFUND POLICY: If Menlo does not cancel the trip but a participant chooses to withdraw, the participant must inform the Global Programs Director (pbrown@menloschool.org) and the Program Director of (erin@worldleadershipschool.com) in an email communication. Menlo will refund recoupable fees according to the following schedule: By 3/18, 50% refund. No refunds will be given for withdrawal after 3/18 or for participants departing the trip early.*

MEDICAL AND EVACUATION EXPENSES: It is the responsibility of the student and the student's family to understand the limits of any medical and evacuation policy, and to provide up-front payment of emergency services when required.

CELL PHONES: In order to maintain the integrity of Borderlands' immersive experience, students will relinquish their cell phones to trip leaders upon entry into the target area. Cell phones will be returned to students when they are in the airport awaiting the return flight home.

VIOLATION OF RULES AND REGULATIONS: If a participant acts in a way that is injurious to himself or herself, people of the host community, or other participants on the trip, or generally conducts himself or herself in a way that is disruptive to the trip, we reserve the right to send the participant home without refund or to require parental pickup at the travel site. Underage use of alcohol and the use of illegal drugs are cause for dismissal. Participants sent home early or who choose to return for any reason, including sickness, personal emergencies or injury, will be responsible for all medical costs and will absorb travel and related costs associated with an unscheduled departure.

*Recoupable fees do not include airline fees and deposits Menlo pays to travel organization on the student's behalf.

Please contact Peter Brown with any questions at 650.330.2001 ext. 2238 or email pbrown@menloschool.org.

READ THIS DESCRIPTION CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING FORMS.