

MENLO ABROAD



MALAYSIA



May 18-June 7, 2026



Menlo Abroad: Malaysia

May 18-June 7, 2026



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 18-June 7, 2026

(Note that participants will be out of the country and unable to return for Commencement or related activities. June 7 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.²

Trip Leaders: There will be two Menlo-affiliated trip leaders: Upper School Science teacher Tanya Buxton and Upper School Math teacher Yu-Loung Chang. We will be joined by leaders from the Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Malaysia (ECOMY) for most of the trip.

All-Inclusive Fee³: \$6400. 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 29, Menlo Abroad courses complete on the evening of June 7, 2026.

² Because we will be doing long hikes in Taman Negara and in Penang students should be in good physical shape.

³ 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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ITINERARY

(Note: Itinerary is subject to change, and full details will be shared with families closer to the date of departure.)

Menlo Abroad is a progressive journey, broadly divided into three phases. The first is orientation, beginning on the Menlo campus and continuing in the destination country; the second is the homestay and community engagement phase, the longest period and heart of the travel experience. The third and final phase is transference, a time of reflection and meaning making, concluding on the Menlo campus.

Phase 1: Orientation & Acclimation

- **Location:** Menlo Campus - Kuala Lumpur - Taman Negara
- **Focus:** Preparation. Cultural context. Group connection.
- **Dates:** May 18-May 22

Students begin their journey on the Menlo campus before traveling to Malaysia for continuing orientation activities in Kuala Lumpur and then to Kuala Tahan. Highlights include visits to Chinatown, Islamic Art Museum and National Mosque, Batu Caves in and around Kuala Lumpur and a nightwalk in Taman Negara, a rainforest, and Malaysia's largest national park.

Phase 2: Homestay & Community Engagement

- **Location:** Kuala Tahan - Taman Negara
- **Focus:** Immersion. Relationship-building. Meaningful contribution.
- **Dates:** May 23-June 2

During this phase, students live with host families and involve themselves in service work. Highlights include the immersive stay at FELCRA, the homestay village in Kuala Tahan, projects related to the Taman Negara, such as the development of an e-Guide on birds, wildlife and the Bateq, the indigenous people who the students will meet and interact with. There will be excursions and evening sports and games in the village.

Typical Day in Phase 2

- Breakfast with homestay family
- Check-in with cohort
- Community engagement activity: species data collection in Taman Negara
- Lunch on river
- Boat ride to Lata Berkoh
- Return to FELCRA village
- Dinner and evening soccer with homestay family and community members

Phase 3: Transference & Reflection

- **Location:** Ipoh - Penang - Menlo Campus
- **Focus:** Reflection, Synthesis, Looking ahead.
- **Dates:** June 3-June 7

The final phase takes place mostly in Penang, where students take part in reflection activities while exploring a culturally rich and fun part of Malaysia. The journey concludes with travel back to SFO and a reunion with families on the Menlo campus.



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TIMELINE OF APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT PROCESS

- January 9** Announcement of Menlo Abroad and Borderlands programs at upper school assembly
- January 27** Applications due
- February 6** Participants notified
- February 10** Forms and Payment due by 3:00 pm
- April 21, 6:00 pm** Pre-departure information night (MS Garage) for enrolled students and their parents (meeting is mandatory for student and at least one parent)
- May 18, 9:00 am** Menlo Abroad: Malaysia orientation on Menlo campus; evening departure for Malaysia
- May 18-June 6** Menlo Abroad: Malaysia trip
- June 7** Re-entry day on Menlo Campus and completion of reflections and celebration⁴

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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 at times 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.

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 10: To secure a place in the program each of the following must be submitted:

To Dorelia Arias at Reception, Stent Hall:

1. A check payment payable to *Menlo School* for \$6400. Write participant's name and *Malaysia* on the memo line. Financial aid recipients will be contacted by the financial aid with a revised program fee.
2. All required Menlo and third party forms via Permission Click.

By April 13: Deadline for any outstanding submissions, e.g., *Parent Authorization for Minor Traveller* form (hard copy) or digitized passport copy.

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 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 Executive Director Andrew Sebastian of ECOMY (ajsebastian@hotmail.com) in an email communication. Menlo will refund recoupable fees. No refunds will be given for withdrawal 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: No cell phones or internet-connected devices are allowed on the trip.

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.