

Labuan

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The Federal Territory of Labuan comprises Labuan Island (75 km²) and six other smaller islands (Pulau Burung, Pulau Daat, Pulau Kuraman, Pulau Papan, Pulau Rusukan Kecil, and Pulau Rusukan Besar), which have a combined total area of 92 km². The islands lie 8 km off the coast of Borneo, adjacent to the Malaysian state of Sabah and the independent state of Brunei Darussalam, on the northern edge of Brunei Bay facing the South China Sea. Labuan Island is mainly flat and undulating and the highest point is only 85 meters. Over 70% of the island is still covered with vegetation. Bandar Labuan, formerly known as Victoria, is the major town and port and faces Brunei Bay. There are several attractions and places of interest on Labuan. The military cemetery contains various war graves and memorials to the fallen of World War II. This includes British, Australian, Indian, Sarawakian, Bruneian, North Borneo and Empire troops. There is also a memorial celebrating the surrender of the Japanese to the Australian Forces in 1945. There are also remnants of Labuan's history as a Royal Navy Coaling station, including 'the chimney', a well known local landmark. There is a Labuan Maritime Museum. Labuan is also the base for diving on four popular wreck dives: the Cementwreck, the American wreck, the Australian wreck and the Blue Water wreck. Labuan is the main island of the Malaysian Federal Territory of Labuan. Labuan is best known as an offshore financial centre and a tourist destination for nearby Bruneians and scuba divers. The name Labuan derives from the Malay word labuhan meaning anchorage. In 2007 the population was estimated at 85,000 people. Recognizing Labuan's strategic location and proximity to major shipping routes and offshore oil and gas fields, the Federal Government launched a long-term development program to jump-start Labuan's stagnating economy and to encourage the influx of both domestic and foreign investments. As Malaysia's only deep water anchorage, Labuan is a free port, a Federal Territory, and an International Offshore Financial Centre (IOFC).