How to Work Out How Many Ringgit You'll Actually Get From an SGD Transfer

When you send money from Singapore to Malaysia, the number you see on the exchange rate screen is rarely the number that lands in the recipient's account. The difference comes down to a few predictable factors that every sender should understand before confirming a transfer. Knowing how to estimate the final ringgit amount helps you compare services fairly and avoid surprises.

Currency conversion is not a simple multiplication of your Singapore dollars by the mid-market rate you see on Google. Banks and transfer services add costs in two main ways: a transparent fee and a hidden markup in the exchange rate itself. To estimate what the recipient will actually receive, you need to account for both.

Start With the Amount You Are Sending

The first step is straightforward: decide how many Singapore dollars you want to send. This is your base figure. Most online platforms let you enter the sending amount first, then show you what the recipient gets. But if you are comparing services, you need to look past the headline rate and check what deductions apply.

Some services ask for the amount in Malaysian ringgit instead, meaning you tell them how much the recipient should receive and they calculate what you must pay in SGD. Both approaches are valid, but the estimation process differs slightly. For this article, assume you are starting with a fixed SGD amount and want to predict the MYR result.

Find the Transfer Fee

The transfer fee is the most visible cost. It may appear as a flat charge, a percentage of the amount, or a combination of both. Banks tend to charge a flat fee for international transfers, while many digital services use a percentage. A few providers advertise "zero fees" and recover their costs entirely through the exchange rate.

When you see a fee quoted, subtract it from your sending amount first. For example, if you send 1,000 SGD and the fee is 10 SGD, the amount that will actually be converted is 990 SGD. Some services deduct the fee from the transferred amount rather than adding it on top, so read the terms carefully.

Watch out for tiered fees. A transfer of 500 SGD might carry a different fee percentage than one of 5,000 SGD. The same service may advertise a low flat rate for small transfers but apply a percentage for larger amounts. Always check the fee schedule for your specific amount.

Understand the Exchange Rate and the Margin

After fees, the exchange rate is where most of the hidden cost lives. The mid-market rate is the one you see on financial news sites and currency converters. It is the wholesale rate that banks use to trade among themselves. No retail service offers this rate to individuals. Every provider adds a margin, also called a spread, to make money.

The margin can be expressed as a percentage above the mid-market rate. A margin of 0.5% means you get a rate that is 0.5% worse than the mid-market rate. Some services show you the exact rate they will apply before you confirm. Others hide the margin by displaying a rate that already includes it, without telling you what the mid-market rate is.

To estimate the ringgit amount, you need the rate actually used by the provider, not the mid-market rate. If a service quotes a rate of 3.40 MYR per 1 SGD while the mid-market rate is 3.45, the margin is roughly 1.45%. Apply that rate to the amount after fees have been subtracted.

Check for Additional Costs

Some transfers attract extra charges that are easy to miss. Intermediary bank fees can apply when the money passes through a correspondent bank, especially if you are sending from a smaller Singapore bank to a smaller Malaysian bank. These fees are often deducted from the amount before it reaches the recipient, and the sender may not be warned in advance.

Receiving bank fees are another possibility. The recipient's bank in Malaysia might charge a small fee to credit an incoming international transfer. Not all banks do, but it is worth asking the recipient to check. If you want the full ringgit amount to reach them, you may need to select a "OUR" payment instruction, which tells your bank to cover all fees. That option usually costs more upfront but guarantees the recipient gets the full amount.

Some services also apply a currency conversion fee on top of the margin, particularly if you are sending Singapore dollars that are first converted to US dollars before being converted to ringgit. This double conversion is common in traditional bank transfers and can eat into the final amount significantly. Digital services that specialise in the SGD-MYR corridor usually convert directly, avoiding this extra step.

If you want to compare costs across different providers quickly, a tool like Sgd.to can show you both the fees and the exchange rate margin for each service in one place. It gives you a live view of what different providers offer, so you can estimate the recipient amount without manually checking each website.

Factor in Settlement Time

The time it takes for the transfer to settle can affect the rate you get, especially if you are using a service that locks in the rate at the moment you initiate the transfer. Most digital services offer a guaranteed rate for a short period, often 15 to 30 minutes. If you take longer than that, the rate may change.

For bank transfers, the rate is usually set when the bank processes the transaction, which could be hours or even a day after you submit the request. If the SGD-MYR rate moves in the meantime, you might receive more or less than you expected. Some banks allow you to lock in a rate for a fee or by using a forward contract, but that is more common for large or business transfers.

If you are sending money for a time-sensitive purpose, such as paying a bill or closing a property deal, consider using a service that offers an instant rate lock. The trade-off is that these services often charge a slightly higher margin to offset their risk.

Check Transfer Limits

Transfer limits can affect your estimation in two ways. First, if your amount exceeds the maximum for a particular service, you may need to split the transfer into multiple transactions. Each transaction carries its own fee and may use a different rate, making the total harder to predict.

Second, some services offer better rates for larger transfers. If you are sending a small amount, the margin may be higher because the fixed costs of processing the transfer are spread over less money. Conversely, very large transfers might trigger manual review or additional compliance checks that delay the rate lock.

Knowing the limits of the service you are considering helps you choose the right one for your amount. A service that excels at 10,000 SGD may be a poor choice for 500 SGD, and vice versa.

Putting It All Together: A Worked Example

Suppose you want to send 2,000 SGD to a family member in Johor. You find a digital transfer service that charges a flat fee of 8 SGD and applies an exchange rate of 3.42 MYR per 1 SGD. The mid-market rate at the time is 3.46. Your calculation looks like this:

- Amount after fee: 2,000 - 8 = 1,992 SGD
- Converted amount: 1,992 x 3.42 = 6,812.64 MYR
- If the mid-market rate had been used: 2,000 x 3.46 = 6,920 MYR
- The difference is 107.36 MYR, which is the combined cost of the fee and the margin.

Now suppose the recipient's bank in Malaysia charges a 10 MYR incoming transfer fee. That would be deducted from the 6,812.64 MYR, leaving 6,802.64 MYR. If you had selected a "OUR" payment instruction at an extra cost of 15 SGD, the total fee would be 23 SGD instead of 8 SGD, and the recipient would receive the full 6,812.64 MYR.

This example shows why it is worth checking both the fee structure and the exchange rate margin, and asking the recipient about any bank charges on their end. Small differences add up, especially for larger or more frequent transfers.

When to Use a Currency Converter for Estimation

A live currency converter that shows both the mid-market rate and the rates offered by different services can save you time. Instead of manually subtracting fees and applying margins, you can enter your sending amount and see the estimated recipient amount across several providers side by side. The key is to use a converter that updates rates in real time and includes fee information for each service.

Tools like Sgd.to are built specifically for the SGD-MYR corridor. They pull live rates and fee data so you can compare at a glance. That said, always double-check the final quote on the provider's own website before confirming a transfer, because rates and fees can change between the time you check a comparison tool and the time you initiate the transaction.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

One common mistake is assuming that a zero-fee transfer means no cost at all. If a service charges no fee, it almost certainly builds its profit into the exchange rate margin. Compare the total cost in ringgit, not just the fee line.

Another mistake is relying on the mid-market rate to estimate the recipient amount. The mid-market rate is useful for understanding the direction of the market, but it is not a rate you can actually get. Always use the rate the provider quotes for your specific transfer.

Finally, do not ignore small amounts. A margin difference of 0.3% might seem negligible, but on a 10,000 SGD transfer it adds up to 30 SGD, which is roughly 102 MYR at current rates. Over several transfers a year, that becomes a meaningful sum.

Estimating the ringgit you will receive from an SGD transfer is a matter of gathering three numbers: the sending amount minus fees, the exchange rate actually used, and any additional charges along the way. Once you have those, the calculation is simple. The real work is in finding those numbers before you commit, and that is where a little time spent comparing pays off.