



PRESS RELEASE

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MALAYSIA REGISTERS 25.7 MILLION TOURISTS IN 2015

PUTRAJAYA, 31 March 2016: From January to December 2015, Malaysia welcomed a total of 25.7 million (25,721,251) tourists and RM69.1 billion tourism receipts.

Compared to Visit Malaysia Year 2014, for which there was a bigger financial allocation conduct various publicity and promotion activities, the 2015 tourist arrivals and receipts registered a decline of 6.3% and 4.0% respectively.

However, a fair comparison between 2013, for which there was no special allocation, and 2015 performance shows tourist arrivals last year recorded a 0.02% increase.

The top 10 tourist generating markets to Malaysia from January to December 2015 were Singapore (12,930,754), Indonesia (2,788,033), China (1,677,163), Thailand (1,343,569), Brunei (1,133,555), India (722,141), the Philippines (554,917), Australia (486,948), Japan (483,569) and South Korea (421,161).

In 2015, the ASEAN region contributed a 74.4% share with 19.1 million tourists. Among ASEAN countries, Thailand and Cambodia were the countries that showed positive growth, registering an increase of 3.4% and 1.8% respectively compared to the same period last year. Other ASEAN countries showed a decline in tourist arrivals: Indonesia (-1.4%), Brunei (-6.6%), Singapore (-7.2%), Laos (-8.2%), the Philippines (-10.3%), Vietnam (-19.6%) and Myanmar (-30.2%).

A strong Singapore Dollar and availability of more holiday destination choices caused a reduction of Singapore arrivals to Malaysia. The regional haze phenomenon in late August until October also affected travel to Malaysia. Besides that, security issue in eastern Sabah, incidents in aviation industry as well as earthquake and floods were among the issues that affected travel decisions to Malaysia for the first half of 2015.

The medium-haul markets contributed 18.8% or 4.8 million tourists to Malaysia's total arrivals in 2015.

Despite a challenging environment, tourist arrivals from Taiwan, China and South Korea registered positive growth, with an increase of 3.1%, 4.0% and 9.2% respectively. However, countries that registered negative growth during this period were India (-6.2%), New Zealand (-9.8%), Iran (-10.0%), Saudi Arabia (-12.4%), Japan (-12.6%), Australia (-14.8%), UAE (-20.2%) and Kuwait (-23.9%).

MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD

(MINISTRY OF TOURISM & CULTURE, MALAYSIA)
No. 2, Tower 1, Jalan P5/6, Precinct 5, 62200 Putrajaya, Malaysia
Tel: +603 8891 8000; Official: malaysia.travel; Corporate: tourism.gov.my
Facebook: [friendofmalaysia](https://www.facebook.com/friendofmalaysia); Twitter: [tourismmalaysia](https://twitter.com/tourismmalaysia); Blog: blog.tourism.gov.my



The significant increase of Korean tourists to Malaysia was due to the additional seat capacity of 68,080 or 15.6% from this market. Aggressive promotion initiatives taken by Tourism Malaysia in China in 2015 successfully regained the confidence of Chinese travellers to Malaysia. This is further supported by special flight arrangements to Malaysia from China.

However, the routes expansion plan undertaken by Emirates, Etihad Airways and Qatar Airways in Europe and the United States caused a double-digit decline of tourists from Middle Eastern market to our region. Cancellation of routes from Kochi to Kuala Lumpur affected the selection of Malaysia as a preferred destination for Indian tourists. Australian tourist arrivals were hit following the depreciation of the Australian Dollar and termination of the Malaysia Airlines flight from Brisbane since August 2015.

A total of 1.7 million tourists or 6.7% of Malaysia's total arrivals were contributed by the long-haul market. Spain was the only country that registered an increase in tourist arrivals with 3.7%. This is due to a collaboration between Tourism Malaysia and two reality TV shows, namely Peking Express and Big Brother, which created interest in Malaysia.

Countries that registered a decrease in tourist arrivals for the long-haul market included Italy (-5.9%), Sweden (-6.7%), Germany (-8.5%), South Africa (-9.0%), USA (-9.3%), United Kingdom (-10.0%), Russia (-10.6%), France (-10.9%), the Netherlands (-13.7%), Canada (-14.2%) and Kazakhstan (-14.7%).

The termination of services by Malaysia Airlines to Frankfurt beginning May 2015 led to a reduction in seat capacity from 3,378 to 1,547 seats per week, resulting in the decrease of tourist arrivals from Germany. Tourist arrivals from Europe countries continued to drop as travel advisories over the security issue in the East Coast remain broadcasted in the media. Armed attacks on the headquarters of Charlie Hebdo in January and the city of Paris on November impacted tourist arrivals from European countries to Muslim countries.

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For more media releases, media info and media features on Malaysia's tourism industry, kindly visit the Media Centre of Tourism Malaysia's website at <http://www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my/>

MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD OR TOURISM MALAYSIA is an agency under the Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Malaysia. Tourism Malaysia focuses on the specific task of promoting Malaysia at all levels. Since its inception, Tourism Malaysia has grown by leaps and bounds and it has emerged as a major player in the international tourism scene. In 2015, Malaysia registered 25.7 million tourist arrivals and RM69.1 billion in receipts.

Through the Tourism NKEA (National Key Economic Area), collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, other Government agencies and the private sector have been enhanced to help secure Malaysia's position as a leading tourist destination and achieve the country's target of 36 million tourist arrivals and RM168 billion in receipts by 2020.

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The targets set under the Tourism NKEA will be achieved through the implementation of twelve Entry Point Projects (EPPs) clustered under five themes: Affordable Luxury; Nature Adventure; Family Fun; Events, Entertainment, Spa and Sports; and Business Tourism.

Press contact:

Media Relations Unit:

Shukri Hanafiah, Senior Deputy Director, Corporate Communication Division

Tel: +603-8891 8767

Email: shukrihanafiah@tourism.gov.my

Editorial Unit:

Anis Rozalina Ramli (Ms), Senior Editor, Corporate Communication Division

Tel: +603-8891 8759

Email: anisramli@tourism.gov.my

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