



PRESS RELEASE

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MALAYSIA RECEIVES 6.5 MILLION TOURISTS IN THE 1ST QUARTER OF 2015

PUTRAJAYA, 26 May 2015 – Malaysia recorded a total of 6,482,696 tourist arrivals from January to March 2015, indicating a decrease of 8.6% compared to the same period during Visit Malaysia Year 2014. Nevertheless, it represented a slight increase of 0.5% if compared to the same period of 2013, which was a regular year (no special campaign).

The top 10 tourist generating markets to Malaysia for the first quarter of 2015 were Singapore (3,241,651), Indonesia (671,211), China (379,265), Thailand (311,064), Brunei (305,899), India (177,196), the Philippines (138,803), Japan (125,339), South Korea (121,178) and Australia (121,037).

During the same period, the ASEAN region continued to be the largest contributor of tourist arrivals with 73.5% share (4,766,520) of Malaysia's total arrivals. Among ASEAN countries, arrivals from Brunei and Cambodia registered an increase of 3.3% and 0.8% respectively, compared to same period a year ago.

Additional flights offered by Malaysia Airlines from Bandar Seri Begawan to several main cities in Malaysia through Kuala Lumpur contributed to the growth demand from Brunei.

Tourist arrivals from Indonesia registered a decline of 0.8%, followed by the Philippines (-4.2%), Myanmar (-4.3%), Thailand (-6.6%), Singapore (-8.6%), Vietnam (-16.3%) and Laos (-49.7%).

The poor performance can be attributed to several reasons. The air tragedies of 2014 affecting travel decisions for holiday was only realised during the winter travel season. In addition, arrivals from Malaysia's immediate neighbours, i.e. Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, and Indonesia, by road were severely affected by the floods that affected some parts of Malaysia.

Besides that, the sudden interest of many countries in the region to draw each other's tourists resulted in greater choices for Chinese, Thai, Indonesian, Japanese, and Singaporean tourists. Japan too had joined the league to draw tourists from these markets by liberalising its visa regime and carrying out greater promotional efforts. The popularity of Japan and Korea for ASEAN tourists has grown substantially.



MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD

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The medium-haul markets contributed 18.9% or 1,223,480 tourists to Malaysia's total arrivals from January to March 2015. Countries that registered positive growth were South Korea (+11.2%) and India (+2.5%).

This growth can be attributed to some positive developments in accessibility from the markets. A total of 54 special flights were launched by Eastar Jet Airlines and Asiana Airlines to connect Incheon/Kota Kinabalu and Busan/Kota Kinabalu from December 2014 to March 2015. Besides that, for the Indian market, AirAsia introduced a daily flight from Hyderabad to Kuala Lumpur with promotional fares from as low as RS4,999 (RM290), beginning 8 December 2014.

Several countries recorded a drop in tourist arrivals, namely Taiwan (-1.6%), Iran (-10%), Saudi Arabia (-12.5%), New Zealand (-16.2%), Japan (-16.4%), United Arab Emirates (-22.6%), Australia (-22.7%), China (-27.1%) and Kuwait (-45%).

Economic uncertainty in Australia discouraged their people from travelling overseas, while less Japanese travelled overseas due to the depreciation in the value of Yen.

A total of 491,099 tourists or 7.6% of Malaysia's total arrivals were contributed by the long-haul markets during the first quarter of 2015. The only market that registered positive growth was Spain (7.3%). This was due to some new promotion initiatives and the improved accessibility between Spain and Malaysia by Turkish Airlines contributed to greater interest which triggered this growth.

The air tragedies in 2014 affected the decision of travellers from winter travel season markets. Countries that registered a decline in arrivals were the Netherlands (-13%), Russia (-16.9%), Sweden (-19.6%), Italy (-3.2%), Germany (-6.8%), France (-11%), the United Kingdom (-12.1%), the United States (-13%), South Africa (-13.7%), Canada (-16.6%), and Kazakhstan (-18%).

Note: Data on tourist arrivals is supplied by the Immigration Department of Malaysia.

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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 2014, Malaysia registered 27.4 million tourist arrivals and RM72 billion in receipts, making tourism its second largest foreign exchange earner.

Malaysia celebrated its fourth **VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR (VMY)** in 2014 with the theme "Celebrating 1Malaysia Truly Asia". The promotion of the country continues with the **MALAYSIA YEAR OF FESTIVALS (MyFEST)** campaign in 2015 with the theme "Endless Celebrations" emphasising the various festivals celebrated by its multicultural society. Both campaigns are key drivers towards achieving the country's target of 36 million tourist arrivals and RM168 billion in receipts by 2020, as outlined in the Tourism NKEA (National Key Economic Area).

Through the Tourism NKEA, 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. 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.

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