



**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **MALAYSIA'S CRUISE TOURISM SHOWS GROWING TREND**

**PUTRAJAYA, 11 July 2017:** Last month, brand new super luxury passenger vessel, Majestic Princess, made her maiden call at the Boustead Cruise Centre, Port Klang, bringing some 3,560 passengers from 41 countries and 1,350 crew members to Malaysian shores.

The cruise ship was on its "Silk Road Sea Route," a 49-day journey from Rome to Shanghai. During the voyage, she visited a total of 22 ports including Athens, Dubai, Cochin, Singapore, and Xiamen before arriving in Shanghai, her new homeport in China, in July. In Malaysia, she berthed at Port Klang and Penang.

Over the last few years, Malaysia has seen an encouraging number of cruise ships calling at the various country's ports. In fact, Malaysia has welcomed guests on Cunard Line's ultra-luxury Queen Mary II and Queen Victoria ocean liners, the UK's Arcadia cruise liners, as well as passenger vessels such as Costa Allegra, Diamond Princess, Pacific Sun and Europa, among others.

Between January and May 2017, a total of 253 international cruise ships called at the country's 11 ports indicating an increase of 9.48% compared to the same period in 2016. For the same period, the country received 405,554 cruise passengers compared to 330,473 passengers, signifying an increase of 18.51%.

Affordable exchange rates, modern infrastructure and facilities, warm weather, friendly people, a politically stable government, and numerous tourist attractions that are easily accessible from the ports make Malaysia the ideal stopover for cruise line operators.

Malaysia's cruise terminals such as Langkawi, Penang, Port Klang and Melaka are located close to local attractions, offering cruise passengers the experience of a big-city atmosphere and easy access to ecotourism attractions, beaches, authentic culture and exotic cuisine. Food is a major attraction in Penang and passengers can not only sample the famous variety of cuisine but also enjoy cooking lessons during shore excursions. Meanwhile, the Kota Kinabalu port in Borneo is a gateway to the natural beauties of the rainforest and orangutan watching which are popular among many segments of the cruise market.

Meanwhile Malaysian ports are fully-equipped with extensive and state-of-the-art facilities, offering convenient berthing spots for cruise ships from all over the world.

### **MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD**

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It's all part of the Malaysian Government's recognition of tourism as a key economic area for the country's growth, with cruise tourism being one of 12 focus areas for development over the next eight years.

Already, initiatives have been put in place – the government has set up the Malaysia Cruise Council (MCC), which is the governing body over all the major ports in Malaysia. The MCC is made up of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, the Ministry of Transport, and various representatives from the public and private sectors, and is the single body that coordinates efforts towards making Malaysia a cruise-friendly destination.

Another initiative to capitalise on a growing international cruise passenger market is the development of a Straits Riviera "cruise playground" comprising six primary ports and other secondary ports in Malaysia.

ASEAN member states have also recognised the potential of cruise as a driver of tourism growth for the region. At this year's ASEAN Tourism Forum in Singapore, ASEAN Ministers came to an agreement to develop cruise tourism in the region, and committed to develop a Joint Declaration on Cruise Tourism that would set out principles to spur port and destination development in the region.

Globally, in the past ten years, the cruise passenger market has grown at an average of 14% annually. By 2035, 4.5 million cruise passengers are expected to sail through Southeast Asia.

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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.tourism.gov.my/>*

**MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD OR TOURISM MALAYSIA** is an agency under the Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Malaysia. It focuses on the specific task of promoting Malaysia as a preferred tourism destination. Since its inception, it has emerged as a major player in the international tourism scene. In 2016, Malaysia registered 26.8 million tourist arrivals and RM82.1 billion in receipts, placing it among the major tourism destinations of the world.

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**Accompanying pictures:**



Caption for above pic: The plaque exchange between the Deputy Director General of Tourism Malaysia, Dato' Chong Yoke Har, and Majestic Princess' Captain, Craig Stewart Street



Caption for above pic: Passengers of Majestic Princess given a traditional Malaysian welcome



Caption for above pic: The welcome reception by Tourism Malaysia is an effort under its Maiden Call programme as an incentive for ships to make Malaysia their port of call

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