



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOURISM MALAYSIA WELCOMES AIR CHINA TO MALAYSIA

PUTRAJAYA, 26 OCTOBER 2015: Tourism Malaysia is happy to welcome the inaugural flight by Air China, the flag carrier and one of the major airlines of the People's Republic of China, to Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) last night. The new, four times a week service from Beijing Capital International Airport operates using an Airbus A330-300 aircraft.

To celebrate the occasion, the Chairman of Tourism Malaysia, Mr. Wee Choo Keong, gave a special welcome dinner for Air China officials and crew as well as the passengers of the inaugural flight tonight at Saloma Bistro and Theatre Restaurant in Kuala Lumpur. Also feted were a group of Chinese media and tourism trade participants of the Tourism Malaysia Mega Fam, who are here to have a first-hand experience of Malaysia's tourism attractions and offerings.

Mr. Wee said, "This is indeed a significant moment in the tourism history of Malaysia and China, as we move forward to strengthen ties between our two countries.

"China is an important market for Malaysia, bringing in 1.6 million tourists to Malaysia last year. It is ranked third in our top ten tourist source markets after Singapore and Indonesia, and naturally, we wish to strengthen our efforts to engage with this market.

"Air China's return to Malaysian shores is especially meaningful this year. It demonstrates Air China's confidence in Malaysia's tourism industry despite a difficult year. Malaysia is proud to be working together with a leader in the aviation industry.

"Connectivity is, after all, the heart of tourism, and I am sure that the reestablishment of this direct route will help improve tourist arrivals and receipts between our two nations.

"I believe that Chinese tourists will appreciate Malaysia for our natural resources – our pristine rainforests, beautiful islands and beaches, marine life and many more. With Mandarin being widely spoken here, along with the warm, sunny weather year-round, Chinese tourists will feel truly at home in our multi-racial and multi-cultural country."

With this four weekly Air China flight, connections to China has increased to 195 flights a week, with a maximum capacity of 40,896 passengers.

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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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