



Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia

MEDIA RELEASE

MINISTRY OF TOURISM MALAYSIA LAUNCHES ITS INNOVATIVE HOMESTAY E-MARKETING PROMOTION TO ENHANCE HOMESTAY REACH

*THE INNOVATIVE TOURISM'S PROGRAM, LAUNCHED BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
IS TO BOOST RURAL ECONOMY*

HULU SELANGOR, 18 April 2010 – As part of an innovative effort to aggressively and creatively promote the Homestay program throughout the country, the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia today launched a program called the “Homestay e-Marketing Promotion”.

This promotion through the new media, which is the first of its kind in the world, was officially launched today by YAB Tan Sri Muhyiddin Hj Mohd Yassin, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia.

The Homestay e-Marketing Promotion is a new and creative tourism product that promotes Malaysia's Homestay through mobile phones. Through this advance technology, Homestay operators in Malaysia will be able to reach a wider segment of potential local and international tourists.

Through this new technology, tourist will be able to deal directly with homestay operators via their **3G video mobile phones** by making a **video call** to *33307.

Through a dial of number, they will be provided with information, pictures and video of the selected homestay.

“Homestay is aimed to increase the participant of the rural community in the tourism industry and a way to reduce the rural-urban migration. We hope by launching this innovative program, it will help to aggressively promote Homestay and intensify the source of income for Homestay operators” said Dato’ Sri Dr Ng Yen Yen, Minister of Tourism Malaysia.

Local visitors and foreign tourists will also be able to view various homestays and information on its packages and costs via the Homestay e-Marketing Promotion ’s official website, www.go2homestay.com. The website provides visitors and tourists with location map and information of homestay owners. As of today, the website has currently over 3,000 hits a day.

“By using modern technology, especially the internet will not only lower the costs for marketing promotions but will attract more attention and make connectivity with the global community market with just a click on the `mouse’ , 24 hours daily” added Dato’ Sri Dr Ng.

The homestay concept is focused on lifestyle and experiential. Local visitors and tourist will be able to learn more about close-knit family relationship, enjoy sumptuous home-cooked food and discover the simple lifestyle in the ‘*kampung*’ (village). It offers tourist a chance to experience the daily life outside the bustling capital cities and puts the visitor closer to nature, our cultures and friendly Malaysians.

“Through homestay program as well, for local visitors, we will be able to promote and share the national aspiration, which is to increase the spirit of integration and unity by promoting intra-cultural interaction” said Dato’ Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen.

Each homestay has something unique to offer visitors and organises its own special activities for their guests such as jungle trekking, fishing, kite flying, rubber tapping, fruit picking, handicraft-making, and more.

The homestay programme in Malaysia was launched in 1995 in Termeloh, Pahang. Since then, it has expanded to various other states in the country, including Sabah and Sarawak. To date, a total of 3,283 homestay operators from 141 homestay have been trained and licensed throughout the country.

For the year 2009, homestay experienced a 77% increase in visitor arrivals which comprised 130,038 domestic visitors and 31,523 foreign tourists totaling to 161,561 visitors, compared to only 91,533 visitors in 2008.

For the months of January and February this year, a total of 22,928 (domestic: 17,431 and foreign: 5,497) visitors have visited homestay, an increase of 15.8% as compared to the same period last year. In 2009, total income derived from homestay increased by 71% amounting to RM10.9 million as compared to RM6.4million in 2008.

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ABOUT HOMESTAY

Malaysia's Homestay Programme was launched in 1995. It is an initiative under the Malaysia's Rural Tourism Master Plan, aimed at increasing the participation of the rural community in the tourism industry. This is also to reduce rural-urban migration.

The main objectives of the Malaysia's Homestay Programme are to fulfil the needs of the:

(i) Tourists:

- to offer a unique experience of rural lifestyle and culture; and
- to develop internationally recognised rural hospitality packages at a competitive price.

(ii) Rural Community:

- to share the benefits of the tourism industry with the rural community and encourage their participation in the tourism sector;
- to boost household income and improves living standards of the rural community, which contribute to the reduction of poverty; and
- to develop rural tourism entrepreneurs and provide job opportunities.

Malaysia's Homestay Programme is an experience where **tourists stay with selected families**, interact and experience the daily life of these families whilst experiencing the Malaysian culture. Malaysia's Homestay is **not classified as an accommodation facility**.

The homestay concept is **focused on lifestyle and experiential tourism**. The uniqueness of the traditional songs, dances, cuisines and sports as well as rural economic activities are the main attractions and offers unique experience to the tourists compared to the experience in the city. Among the activities that are commonly packaged under the Malaysia's Homestay Programme are:

(i) Lifestyle and Cultural Activities:

- learn to dance, sing and cook traditional cuisines which are unique to every state in Malaysia;
- traditional sports and games competition;

- participate in religious and cultural ceremony such as wedding ceremony and celebrating Hari Raya; and
- excursion to nearby tourism sites such as waterfall, hot springs and other eco-tourism locations.

(ii) Rural Economic Activities:

- rubber tapping;
- paddy harvesting;
- fish farming and fishing at rivers or sea;
- palm oil and cocoa harvesting and processing;
- visit to the rural micro industrial projects such as handicrafts and food processing; and
- tree planting comprises of flowers, herbs and fruit trees.