



PRESS RELEASE

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## MALAYSIA RANKS FIRST IN THE MASTERCARD-CRESCENTRATING GLOBAL MUSLIM TRAVEL INDEX 2015

**PUTRAJAYA, 13 March 2015** – Malaysia not only topped the list of all OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) destinations, but also ranked first among 100 destinations, based on the report by the MasterCard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index for 2015 (GMTI).

According to the index, a total of 5.9 million Muslim visitors visited Malaysia in 2014, up from 5.7 million in 2013.

The Index was launched by the Deputy Director General (Promotion) of Tourism Malaysia Dato' Haji Azizan Noordin at the Le Meridien Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, recently.

Dato' Haji Azizan believed that Islamic tourism will continue to play a significant role in the vitality of Malaysia's overall tourism landscape.

"Malaysia witnessed a surge in West Asian tourist arrivals over the last few years due to the government's continuous efforts to promote the country to this important market since the 1990s. Last year, arrivals from West Asia were recorded at 353,955 and the top three markets Saudi Arabia (113,921), Iran (72,264), and Oman (34,534)," he said.

He also added that based on 2013 statistics, the West Asia market was recognised as the highest spenders with the longest span of stay with an average of RM7,724.70 throughout 8.3 nights, in Malaysia.

Dato' Haji Azizan also commended MasterCard and CrescentRating for their efforts in developing an informative tool that was able to provide deep insights into the Muslim travel market.

"The MasterCard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index has today set a real precedent for the tourism industry. Not only is it the most in-depth research that we have undertaken so far on the fast-growing Muslim travel market, but has provided all stakeholders with some invaluable insight into how the halal-friendly tourism sector is growing and developing from a global perspective," said Fazal Bahardeen, CEO of CrescentRating & HalalTrip, at the launch of the index.

"With the Global Muslim Travel Index, we are able to better understand what a Muslim traveller looks for when choosing a travel destination. We are proud that Malaysia is the top Muslim travel destination and with this Index, we are now able to equip partners in the travel sector to tailor



**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; <http://www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my>  
[www.facebook.com/friendofmalaysia](https://www.facebook.com/friendofmalaysia); [twitter.com/tourismmalaysia](https://twitter.com/tourismmalaysia); [blog.tourism.gov.my](http://blog.tourism.gov.my)





their products and services to the needs of this unique traveller segment,” said Safdar Khan, group country manager, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei; group head, Islamic Payments, Southeast Asia, MasterCard.

The GMTI looks at in-depth data covering 100 destinations, creating an overall index, based on a number of criteria, which included suitability as a family holiday destination, the level of services and facilities it provides, accommodation options, marketing initiatives as well as visitor arrivals. Malaysia scored 83.8 points.

In the top 10 list under the OIC category, Malaysia was followed by Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Indonesia, Oman, Jordan, Morocco, and Brunei.

In the top 10 halal-friendly non-OIC category, Singapore was on top of the list followed by Thailand, United Kingdom, South Africa, France, Belgium, Hong Kong, USA, Spain, and Taiwan.

For a more in-depth look at the MasterCard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index 2015, please visit <http://www.gmti.crescentrating.com>.

#### ENDS

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 2013, Malaysia registered 25.7 million tourist arrivals and RM65.4 billion in receipts, making tourism its second largest foreign exchange earner and the sixth highest contributor to its Gross National Income (GNI).

Malaysia is celebrating 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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**Press contact:**

**Media & Publicity Unit:**

*Azizah Aziz (Ms), Senior Deputy Director, Communications & Publicity Division*

*Tel: +603-8891 8752*

*Email: azizahaziz@tourism.gov.my*

**Editorial Unit:**

*Anis Rozalina Ramli (Ms), Senior Editor, Communications & Publicity Division*

*Tel: +603-8891 8759*

*Email: anisramli@tourism.gov.my*



**MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD**  
(MINISTRY OF TOURISM & CULTURE, MALAYSIA)  
No. 2, Tower 1, Jalan P5/6, Precinct 5, 62200 Putrajaya, Malaysia  
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