



PRESS RELEASE

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SAPPHIRE PRINCESS MAKES MAIDEN CALL TO PORT KLANG

KLANG, 14 December 2014: Tourism Malaysia, along with the media and cultural troupe, gave a warm welcome reception to 2200 passengers and 715 crew members from the British cruise ship *Sapphire Princess*, which made her maiden call today to Port Klang Cruise Centre (PKCC), Pulau Indah.

The cruise ship is on a 4-day Southeast Asia tour, starting from the cruise terminal in Klang today and will proceed to Penang (Malaysia), followed by Phuket (Thailand). It is scheduled to arrive at Singapore on 18 December.

The welcome reception by Tourism Malaysia is an effort under its Maiden Call programme, which is its annual activity for ships berthing for the first time in Malaysia. It's a part of Tourism Malaysia's efforts to promote Cruise Tourism and also to attract more ship operators to berth in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, in particular.

This programme also aims to promote tourism products in Malaysia through social media, in order to raise the awareness of the Malaysia Year of Festivals 2015 campaign.

Sapphire Princess is a cruise ship owned by Princess Cruises that entered service in 2004 as the twin sister ship of Diamond Princess. She is one of the world's largest cruise ships, with a capacity of approximately 2,670 passengers and is the sixth Gem Class ship built by Princess Cruises. Sapphire Princess was christened on 10 June 2004 in Seattle—the first cruise ship ever to be christened in that port.

The Sapphire Princess previously alternating northbound and southbound Voyage of the Glacier cruises during the summer and in the winter sails Mexico, Hawaii and California Coastal cruises. Beginning 2014, the ship sails roundtrip Asia cruises from Shanghai in the summer months, then from November through February, the ship sails roundtrip Asia cruises out of Singapore.



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Over the last few years, Malaysia has seen an encouraging number of cruise ships calling at the country's ports. Last year, a total of 359 international cruise ships called at the country's six primary ports, namely Port Klang, Penang, Melaka, Langkawi, Kota Kinabalu and Kuching, compared to 340 in 2012, registering a growth of 5.6%. For the same period, the country received 512,400 cruise passengers compared to 475,990 passengers, signifying an increase of 7.6%.

Developing cruise tourism has been outlined in the Tourism National Key Economic Area (NKEA), under its sixth Entry Point Project (EPP) – Creating a Straits Riviera Cruise Playground. In an effort to capitalise on an international cruise passenger market that has grown at an average of 14% annually in the past 10 years, this EPP will see the development of a Straits Riviera, comprising the six primary ports and other secondary ports.

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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.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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