



MEDIA RELEASE

CHARTER FLIGHTS BRING IN MORE FINNISH TOURISTS

A flight carrying 225 passengers from Finland has arrived in Penang on 18 November, signaling the first of a series of charter flights to Penang organized by Finland tour operator, Lomamatkay Oy. The effort is in line with the Ministry's endeavour to boost tourist arrivals from Scandinavia.

The passengers were treated to a warm Malaysian reception at a dinner hosted by Tourism Malaysia at Fort Cornwallis, Penang, on the same night. In her welcome speech, YBhg. Dato' Kee Phaik Cheen, member of Tourism Malaysia Board of Directors, said that though the global crises facing the international population, i.e. rising fuel prices and uncertain economic situation, are affecting the decision to travel long-haul to this region, Malaysia is an attractive option as it is a value-for-money holiday destination with favourable exchange rates.

She also encouraged Lomamatkat Oy to consider organizing charter flights to other destinations in Malaysia.

Lomamatkat Oy, the fourth largest tour operator in Finland, is organising nine charter flights to operate between various cities in Finland and Penang, once every fortnight up until 8 March 2009. Response has been positive, with some flights recording 100 percent, 90 percent and 70 percent capacity. It is expected that more than 2,000 tourists will be brought in via this series of charter flights.

The schedule is as follows:

Flight date	Airport of origin
16 Nov 2008	Pori Airport
30 Nov 2008	Kuopio Airport
14 Dec 2008	Helsinki Airport
28 Dec 2008	Helsinki Airport
11 Jan 2009	Jyvaskyla Airport
25 Jan 2009	Joensuu Airport
8 Feb 2009	Rovaniemi Airport
22 Feb 2009	Vaasa Airport
8 Mar 2009	Helsinki Airport

Some six 14-day/13-night holiday packages to Malaysia have been developed by Lomamatkat Oy for passengers of the charter flights:

- ❖ 14 days in Penang
- ❖ 3 days in Penang / 4 days in Kuala Lumpur / 7 days in Penang
- ❖ 7 days in Penang / 4 days in Kuala Lumpur / 3 days in Penang
- ❖ 3 days in Penang / 10 days in Langkawi / 1 day in Penang
- ❖ 1 day in Penang / 13 days in Pangkor Island
- ❖ 6 days in Penang / 2 days in Cameron Highlands / 2 days in Melaka

With the success of this round of charter flights, Lomamatkat Oy plans to develop weekly charter flights to Penang in the coming holiday seasons.

Finland is among the important tourist markets for Malaysia. For a small country – with a population of only 5.2 million – the total number of departures and the traveling population is relatively high. Among the Finns, there is definitely a general interest in holidaying abroad.

In the last five years, Malaysia has received a steady growth of tourist arrivals from Finland. Finnish arrivals to Malaysia recorded a triple digit growth of 209 per cent from 11,041 tourist arrivals in 2003 to 34,144 tourist arrivals in 2007.

From January to October 2008, Malaysia received a total of 18,595 tourists from Finland.

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